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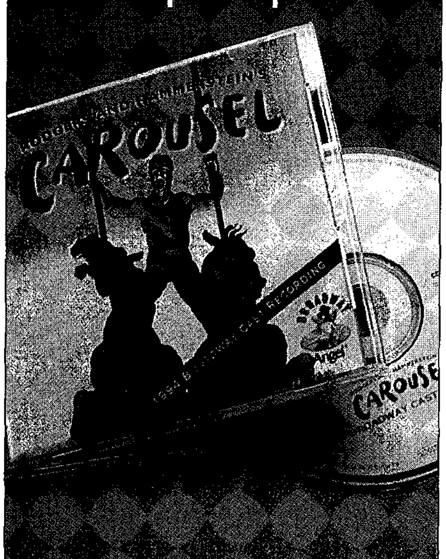

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THE NEW YORKER

JULY 11, 1994

COMMENT Don't Mean Diddly 4
The hidden significance of a crime in Los Angeles.

IN THE MAIL 8

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 10

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 29
Joseph Lelyveld's *Times*, Maya Lin's Penn Station, etc.

DEPARTMENTS

Letter from Washington The Princeling. . . . . *Sidney Blumenthal* 32
Leon Panetta's appointment as chief of staff isn't just business as usual at the White House—it's mobilization for political war.

Annals of Law Cash for Trash . . . . *Jeffrey Toobin* 34
O. J. Simpson's defense may be damaged by witnesses who sell their stories, but the prosecution could be devastated.

Department of Disputation Share the Health . . . . *Michael Kinsley* 42
Who wants socialized medicine? An analysis of competing health-care reforms produces some surprising candidates.

PROFILE Forty-one False Starts . . . . *Janet Malcolm* 50
The process of finding where to begin a portrait of David Salle reveals something about the ways in which artists and writers approach the work they do. With a self-portrait by Salle.

ARTIST AT LARGE Virtual Vegas . . . . *Bill Griffith* 69

FICTION "Sin" . . . . *Edna O'Brien* 73

THE CRITICS

The Theatre "Shlemiel the First" . . . . *John Lahr* 75
Dancing The spring ballet season . . . . *Arlene Croce* 78
The Current Cinema "Wolf" . . . . *Anthony Lane* 83
Books "Loving Garbo" . . . . *Selina Hastings* 86
Briefly Noted 91

POEMS

"History: The Home Movie," 1924 . . . . *Craig Raine* 62
"The Furrow" . . . . *W. S. Merwin* 74

SHOUTS AND MURMURS Eyes on the Ball. . . . . *Alastair Reid* 92

COVER *The Big Splash, by Mark Ulriksen*

DRAWINGS *Lee Lorenz, Robert Grossman, Bernard Schoenbaum, James E. Kirchman, Warren Miller, Robert Mankoff, Gahan Wilson, Michael Crawford, Bill Woodman, Robert Weber, Roz Chast, Victoria Roberts, Danny Shanahan, Jack Ziegler, Leo Cullum, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Michael Maslin, Arnie Levin, Mike Twohy*

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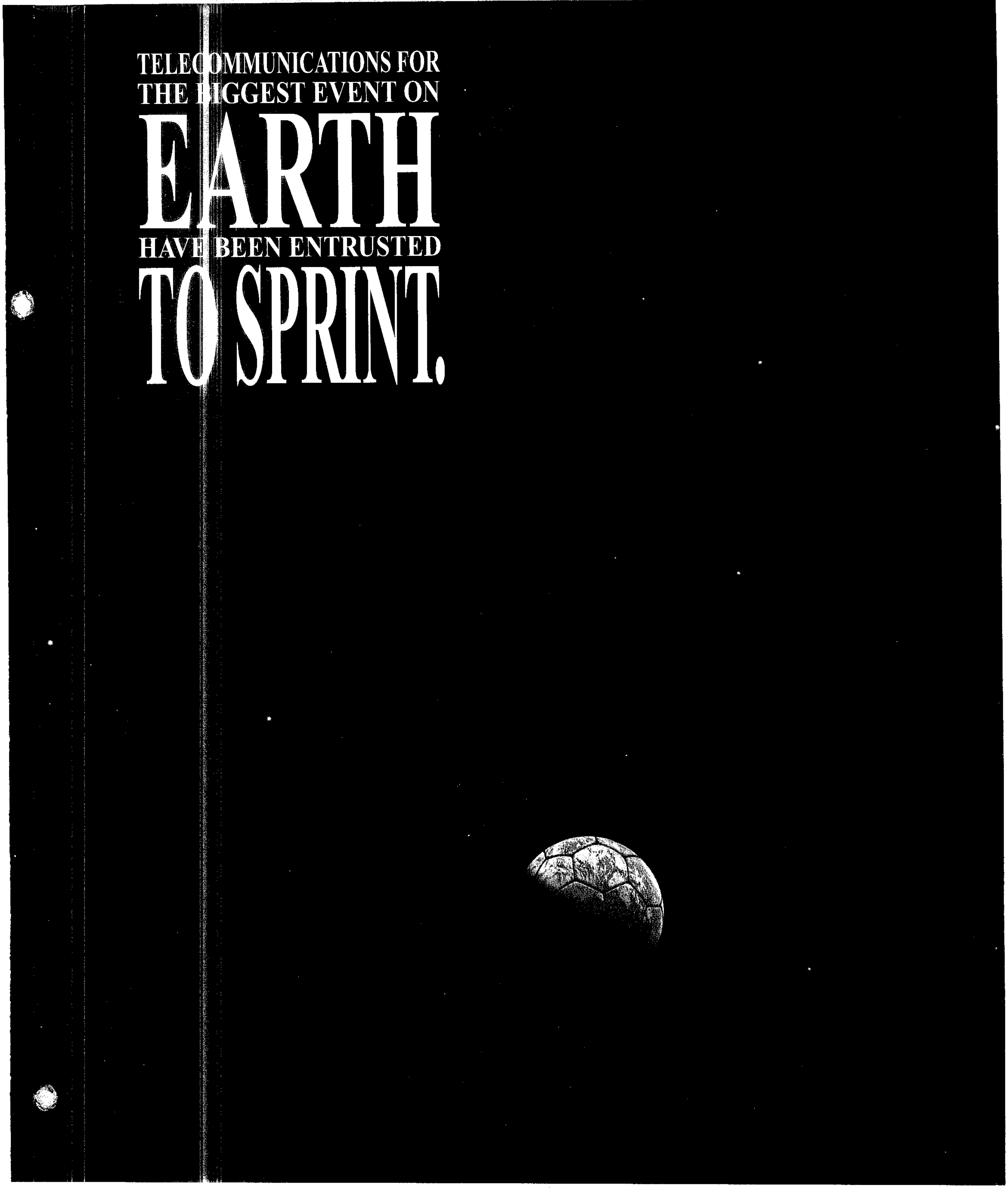
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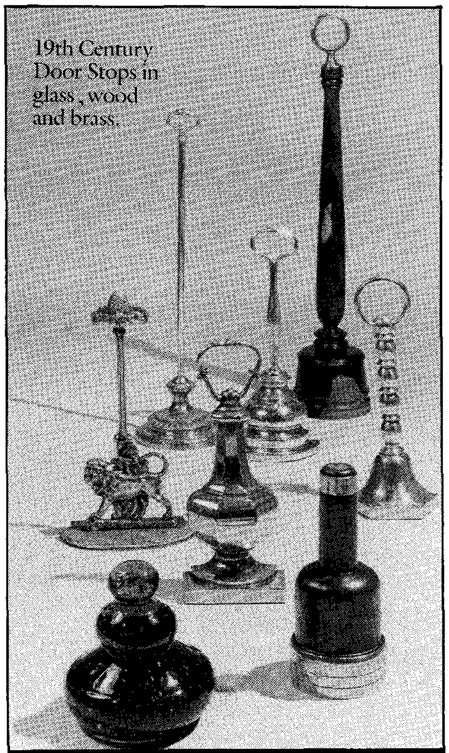

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COMMENT

DON'T MEAN DIDDLY

IN the nearly three weeks since O. J. Simpson's white Bronco, with an imperial escort of helicopters, police cars, and cheering crowds, made its extraordinary tour of the freeways of Los Angeles, the obsession with The Story has shown little sign of abating. The most striking feature of that obsession has been the endless search for portent and meaning—the stately unfolding, in column after column and special after network special, of the belief that what we had here was essentially a *text*, as full of hidden allusions and telling ironies and larger meanings as a passage from Donne. William Safire saw what it meant for the issue of individual responsibility. *Time* saw what it meant for American football. ("There was never a run like last week's final play." Of course, he ran in a *car*.) CBS's "Eye on America" took up what it meant for black role models ("There is great disappointment, in some quarters, about the fall of a role model"), while Brent Staples, in the *Times*, took up the inanity of the whole idea of role models. On and on. The *Times*, as if covering a summit meeting or a Presidential campaign, started grouping its stories under a running head, "The Simpson Case," and on one Friday a subhead deplored "a swelling media circus"—the journalistic equivalent of a roustabout tut-tutting the clowns.

These hysterical convulsions have always occurred, and tabloid journalism has always made the most of them; the human appetite for the morbid, the salacious, and the horrific is not exactly new. What is new is the treatment of every sensational event as a cultural construct. The Menendez brothers tell you something about the decline of California, Tonya and Nancy about class conflict in America, the Simpsons about spouse abuse. In the past, you could luxuriate in a horror without insisting that the horror, or your luxuriating, was an index to the state of American life and belief. In fact, to call the kind of thing we've been seeing in the past couple of weeks tabloid journalism is to do a bit of an injustice to the old tab-

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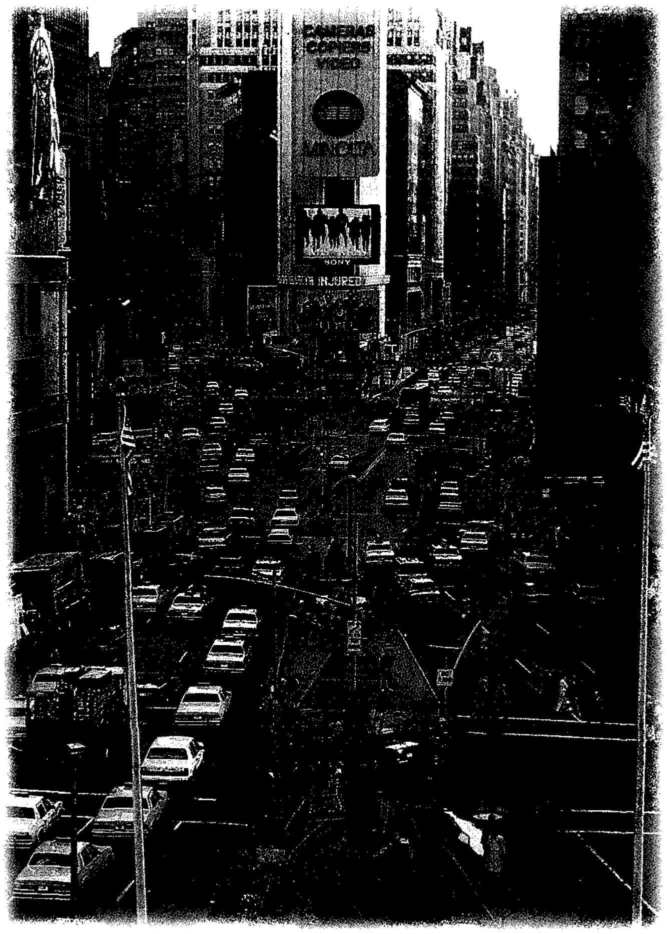

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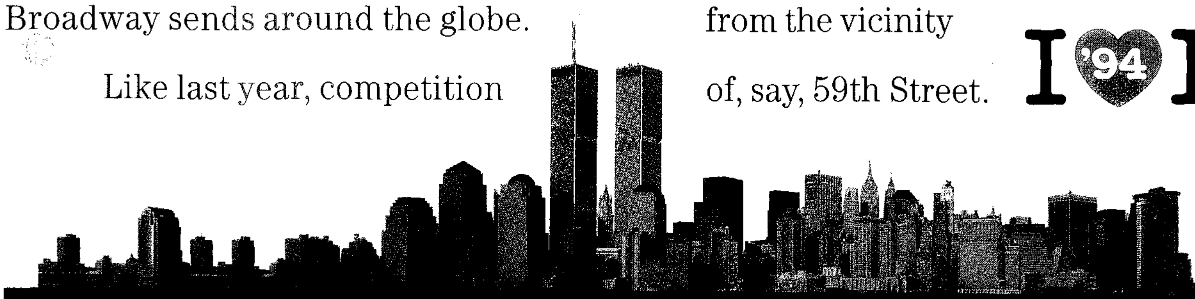

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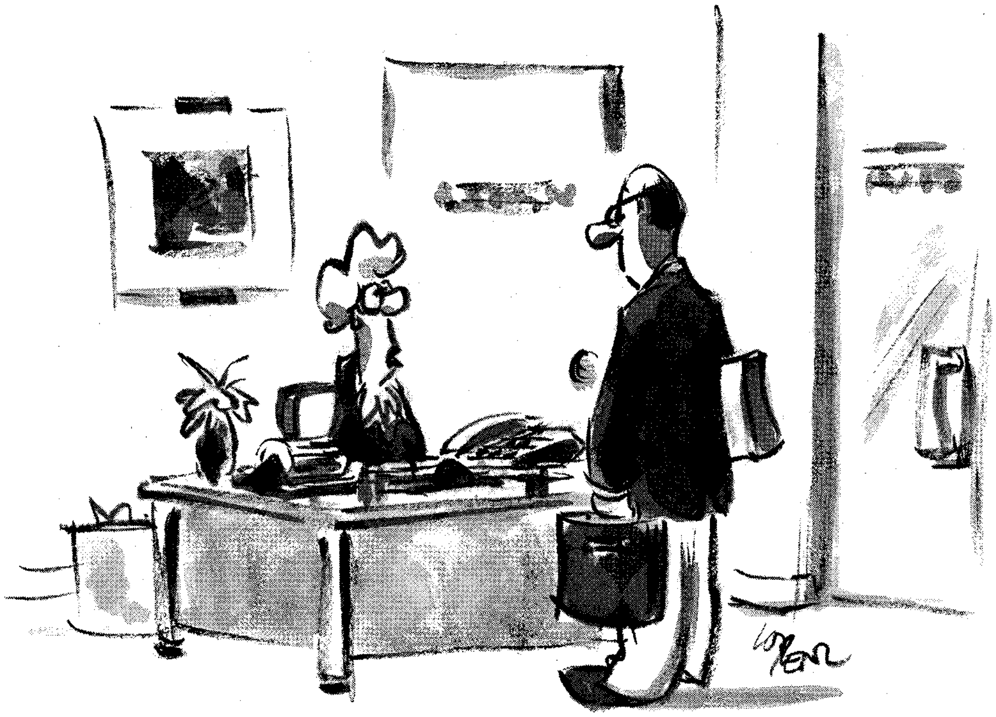

"Mr. Hanlon will be out for a few weeks. His spent fuel rods are being removed."

• •

loids. The tabs of old were not in the cultural-studies business; nobody at the old *Daily Mirror* was writing about what Bruno Hauptmann's arrest meant for ladder safety in America. The old tabs had it right: what makes crimes of passion the stuff of opera and tragedy is precisely that they are not part of the normal fabric of social events—they represent a tear right down the middle of normal life rather than its defining hidden pattern. The point of, for example, Oedipus's tragedy (as, perhaps, of O. J.'s) was that what he had so horribly done, and what had happened to him, was his singular and peculiar horror, to which Fate had terrifyingly and unerringly summoned him, just as she might (instructive thought) sooner or later do to us all. (Today on "Oprah," Kings Who Sleep with Their Moms: "Of course, one good thing that will come out of this tragedy is an increased awareness of the need for retraining facilities for visually challenged ex-tyrants.")

Eventually, the search for what it all means becomes the search for what the media coverage of it all means. That search is now in full cry, and will soon be followed by the search for what the media coverage of the media coverage of what it all means means. Oh, well—who can resist? What *we* think it all means is, first, that the triumph of cable television is now complete. Life unfolds today on television, and newspapers and magazines must play the role of the Greek chorus, commenting on the action. They can seldom hope to find a story. The best they can do, mostly, is to find an angle.

The second, and more ominous, change that has produced the portent-mongering lies in the slightly mistier field of consciousness. Put simply, it is that we, as Americans, no longer believe in the integrity of events; that is, we are no longer able to accept events at their own value—horrifying or funny or just sordid—but must see them as episodes in a drama, by some unknown author. The growth of the paranoid style of explanation—the belief that the truth is hidden beneath the surface of events—has become absolute. Everybody accepts the idea that the truth is hidden. The prizes, in the academy and on the cable box alike, now go to people who can claim, however absurdly, to have detected the real complexion of events behind a mask of particulars that are mere cosmetics. The acceptance of this idea is expressed in the general conviction that obscure events are more meaningful than public ones (that commodity trading fifteen years ago tells you more about the "real" Clintons than their health-care policy right now) and also in the general conviction that the truth can be found only in disguise, behind the scenes.

Exactly thirty years ago, when Marshall McLuhan envisioned the global village—the place, at which we have now arrived, of everybody's instant access to everything—he assumed, optimistically, that it would produce a world of instant understanding, in which we would all be neighbors and what each of us was doing would be known to all the rest of us. Nobody could have foreseen that life in the global village was actually going to *be* like life in a village, and we would turn to the glinty-eyed shamans to explain all that spooky stuff we just saw in the fire. What used to be called, pre-Geraldo, the "primitive mind" was mired in the belief that memorable events are always significant: the comet looms in the sky, and kingdoms must fall; the river floods, and the gods are angry. America's press and polity, on the other hand, once taught that you did not always need to look for an encompassing pattern: that some truths were self-evident, just there to be seen. Some memorable events were not significant, and some very unmemorable events might mean a lot. We were not bound to find the pattern; the point was that people could choose.

To look for meaning where only sensation resides is to put an end to rationality. Events that are memorable enough to be mesmerizing to everybody tend by their nature to be so simple or obvious that they cannot have very subtle or intricate meanings. The big media hoo-has of the past year really have very simple points, which need to be made only once: some people have no shame (the Menendez brothers), some people have no brains (the Menendez jurors), and some people have neither (the Tonya Harding crowd, and, it appears, O. J.). What makes journalism good is not an eye for occult patterns but a willingness to tell plain truths plainly. Occasionally, that includes the plain truth that some of the things we find most spellbinding and intense in our public life don't, in the end, really mean much of anything. ♦

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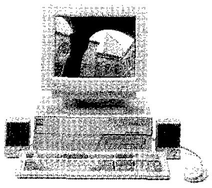

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IN THE MAIL

FIRST LADIES

I was fascinated and disturbed to read Connie Bruck's "Hillary the Pol" (Profile, May 30th) coincidentally with a long-overdue reading of F. A. Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom," published in 1944. Hayek wrote that social planners who believe that their plans are the best are likely to be the most ruthless in coercing people toward what is presumed to be in their own best interest. Now I read that the First Lady sometimes sees others as "fungible"—a different term, to be sure, but one that makes it equally clear that people are chattel when there's a good cause to pursue.

Of course, her health-care efforts are currently in doubt and might fail, but one defeat won't stop someone who, according to the President, "has a visceral, intuitive, almost irrepressible desire to try to find and do the right thing." I think she owes us a full disclosure of her vision—the citizens of a free country deserve it.

M. W. Walcher
Aiken, S.C.

Are we to be alarmed that Hillary Clinton is unwilling to compromise on the health-care plan before it even gets out of the gate? Where would we like her to begin, now that national health care is hanging in the balance? With something more modest? More understandable? Mrs. Clinton is negotiating a deal among competing and somewhat hostile interests—a process tantamount to a peace accord. She is calling on the principals in this health-care debate to be players in a different game, and I think her performance should be assessed by those who are adept at wielding the tools of diplomacy. It seems to me that our most successful diplomatic leaders in recent history have tended to elevate the level of discussion to a moral plane and to conduct their business both through open discussion and in secret meetings. Isn't it also true that the diplomat will often wear the clothes or adopt the customs of the country that he or she visits, and, at the very least, will speak the language in order to facilitate the larger goal?

Laura Engle
Portland, Ore.

The information in "Hillary the Pol" doesn't amount to a hill of beans. Apparently, Hillary Clinton, much like every other effective leader in recent memory, is self-confident and goal-oriented, packages ideas for public consumption, has learned to project warmth, and is mindful of her place in history. So what? Well, Connie Bruck wants us to believe that these are somehow unsavory characteristics and that they render Hillary's every action suspect. Even where virtue is incontrovertible, as in Hillary's transcendence of her alleged marital problems, Ms. Bruck adds the disparaging comment "But one can also imagine that [Bill Clinton] might enjoy a respite from [Hillary's] rectitude." We, the readers, might have enjoyed a respite from the author's constant second-guessing. It seems to serve no other purpose than to neutralize Hillary Clinton.

Linda Kravitz
Chevy Chase, Md.

The statement in "Hillary the Pol" attributed to her former law partner Herb Rule that Mrs. Clinton embraced the cause of women lawyers' advancement "on a national level—not in Arkansas, where there would have been possible local antagonisms" is totally inaccurate. As a result of her work as chair of the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, from 1987 until 1991, Mrs. Clinton became the moving force behind the creation of the Arkansas Bar Association's Opportunities for Women and Minorities Committee. She worked closely with the chief justice and the state-bar president to establish this committee in 1989, brought the staff director of the A.B.A. commission and me to Little Rock to speak at the committee's opening meeting, and was an active participant in the committee's work until she moved to the White House.

LYNN HECHT SCHAFRAN
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I do not understand why in your high praise of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (Comment, May 30th) you must denigrate our present First Lady. Surely you don't mean that a First Lady who behaves differently from Jackie could not be a good First Lady. While I had a great deal of admiration for Jackie, my fondness and respect for Hillary is no less. She is a very different kind of First Lady: visionary, committed, and passionate as well as intelligent and charming.

DOLORES K. YOUNG
San Luis Obispo, Calif.

I was distressed by the historian William Manchester's remark in the May 30th Talk of the Town piece on Mrs. Onassis that until November, 1963, she had never been "west of the Adirondacks." The fact is that the Kennedys honeymooned in Acapulco in 1953, and then Mrs. Kennedy attended the 1956 Democratic Convention in Chicago and also campaigned in the West and Middle West during the 1956 and 1960 primaries. It is Mr. Manchester's accuracy in similarly mundane details that makes his biographies of Churchill and MacArthur such a pleasure.

DENISE MATTHESS HILL
Madison, Ala.

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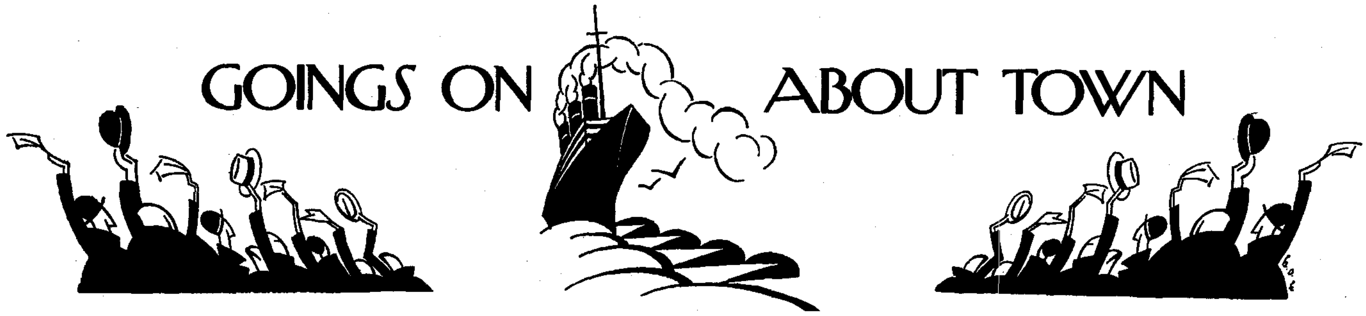

THE THEATRE

Motormouth

Paul Rudnick may be Off Broadway's reigning king of the one-liners, but the most memorable moment in his new play, "The Naked Truth," now at the WPA, is a breathtaking, rapid-fire barrage of *half*-liners, delivered by J. Smith Cameron in a hilarious performance that transforms a warmed-over satire about political correctness and art censorship into a fizzy farce. At the end of the first act, which is set in a photographer's SoHo loft, Smith Cameron, as the lovably bimbotic post-deb daughter of a Republican senator and his socialite wife (played with gusto by John Cunningham and Mary Beth Peil), bursts onstage and launches into a stream of utterances so delightfully bubbleheaded that they make Lorelei Lee sound like an intellectual. Introducing herself to the photographer's black, lesbian, ex-con assistant, she gushes, "Sissy Bemiss Darnley. A pleasure. I know, three names, I had to, it's a choice, it's a statement, I'm a feminist, I'm a person, I'm empowered, I'm out there, yet still feminine." Having stunned everyone into silence, she breezes out, but not before dispensing a few more dollops of giddy self-amazement: "I can't believe it, I'm here, with my mother, and an artist, and a lesbian, is that the correct word, who knows, lesbian-American, can-do gal, Martina, rah!" By the second act, this cheerleader for Upper East Side values has discovered that, even though she's married and has children, she herself is—gasp!—a lesbian. But her innocence and her ditsy propriety remain intact. Eager to learn the rules of this brave new world, she asks, "Do I register?"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Hedda Gabler—Kelly McGillis has the title role in Henrik Ibsen's 1890 psychological drama. Directed by Sarah Pia Anderson. Previews through July 9. Opens July 10 at 2. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Manchurian Candidate—John Lahr's adaptation of the Richard Condon thriller, presented by the Art & Work Ensemble and directed by Perry Liu. Previews begin July 9. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. For reservations, call 925-3960.)

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The Merry Wives of Windsor—Shakespeare's comedy, set during the California Gold Rush. With David Alan Grier, Andrea Martin, Brian Murray, Tonya Pinkins, and Margaret Whitton; directed by Daniel Sullivan. Preview on July 6. Opens July 7 at 8 and runs through July 24. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

The Truth About Ruth—A musical satire about a bearded lady, starring Peter Morris, who also wrote the book and lyrics. Preview on July 6. Opens July 7 at 8:30. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors, especially Robert Stanton and Nancy Opel. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince at the finale. Directed by Robert Jess Roth. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

Birdbones—In a one-man show that had a brief run last winter at the Kitchen, Dudley Saunders tells the story of a poor Southern single woman and her two children. The characters are chronically abused and down on their luck. This may sound grim, but Mr. Saunders' writing and his performance have power, humor, and grace. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285. Closes July 17.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival, with Victor Garber as the Devil and Bebe Neuwirth as Lola. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). The result is a vehicle that swerves between fifties stodginess and nineties cynicism. But the cast delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Family of Mann—Theresa Rebeck, a Ph.D. who has written for sitcoms, has written a play about a Ph.D. who writes for sitcoms, and it isn't pretty: megalomaniacal producers, go-along-to-get-along writers, craven network honchos, sexism by the megadose. No surprises here, but Ms. Rebeck's portrait of the funny-horrible good old boys' world of TV land has the vividness of sharp reporting and the satisfaction of revenge. The good cast, directed by Pamela Berlin, includes Julie White, David Garrison, Robert Duncan McNeill, Lisa Gay Hamilton, and Anne Lange. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Grease!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. Rosie O'Donnell is very likable as the tough-talking Rizzo, and Billy Porter blows the lid off the joint with his Little Richard-like rendition of "Beauty School Dropout." The set, a riot of Day-Glo colors, is by John Arnone, and the lighting and the witty costumes are by Howell Binkley and Willa Kim, respectively. Jeff Calhoun directed and choreographed. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—An autobiographical musical-comedy revue written by, and starring, Leslie Jordan. It's a tale of growing up Tennessean, thespian, and gay. Joe Patrick Ward's energetic musical numbers run the gamut from corn to gospel. Directed by Carolyne Barry. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 25[illegible]W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Merrily We Roll Along—Stephen Sondheim's 1981 musical about a show-biz sellout, based on the Kaufman and Hart play of the same name, has been given a spirited revival by Susan H. Schulman. A few new songs have been added, but no amount of spirit can disguise the essential sourness of George

Furth's book. As the story moves backward in time, from the mid-seventies to the late fifties, the characters progress from shrill bitterness to wide-eyed innocence and the show hammers home its dubious point, which seems to be that being an adult is a bummer. With Malcolm Gets, Adam Heller, Amy Ryder, and Michele Pawk. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 534-5366. Closes July 17.)

Movieland—In Everett Quinton's latest outing, Mr. Q. plays a character called Ruby Stevens (attention, non-campers: that's Barbara Stanwyck's real name), who frenetically acts out parts in half a dozen old movies, including "The Spiral Staircase," "The Ten Commandments," and "Madame X" ("the blondest movie ever made"). (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271. Closes July 10.)

The Naked Truth—Paul Rudnick's new comedy, with John Cunningham, Mary Beth Peil, J. Smith Cameron, and Victor Slezak. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes July 10.)

101 Humiliating Stories—A one-woman show of comic tales written and performed by Lisa Kron. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989. Closes July 17.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shere and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. But much is verbalized and little is said—the words have no proper purchase on the audience's imagination—and there is an absence of pulse in Sondheim's workmanlike score. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Sanctifying Grace—It has been seventeen years since his last confession, and Colin Quinn, actor and standup comedian, is doing a humorous one-man excavation of his old Irish neighborhood in Brooklyn. At the wake of a friend ("That's where the party is"), with a coffin as centerpiece, Quinn offers up a gallery of kind hearts and unredeemable characters, in a brutally funny portrait of a block where alcohol, drugs, and regret are bountiful. Quinn co-wrote the piece with Lou DiMaggio. Robert Moresco directed. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Closes July 17.)

The Spirit Moves—Trazana Beverley stars as a young woman exploring her past in order to rid herself of guilt. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Closes July 17.)

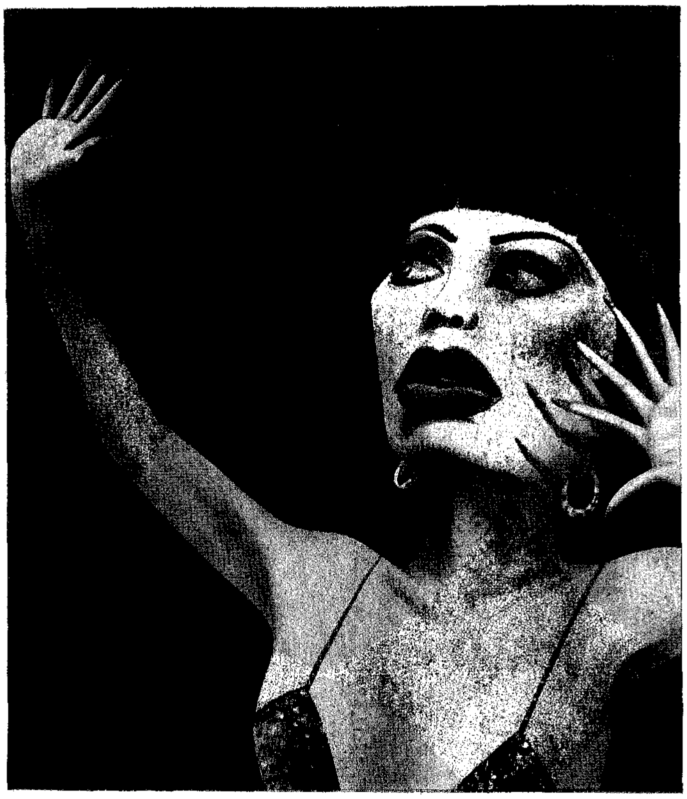
Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Stonewall: Night Variations—En Garde Arts presents the stories of nine characters who were at the Stonewall Inn on June 27, 1969. (Pier 25, West St. between Chambers and Laight Sts. Closes July 17. For tickets, call 779-9777.)

subUrbia—In his one-man shows, Eric Bogosian looks hard at himself in the mirror; in this play, he holds a mirror up to a group of angry and aimless twenty-somethings who hang out in the parking lot of a suburban 7-Eleven, and asks, "What's wrong with kids today?" The answers, alas, are predictable and unilluminating. With Steve Zahn, as a whacked-out dervish of free-floating manic energy, and Josh Hamilton, Wendy Hoopes, and Martha Plimpton. Directed by Robert Falls. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. The songs deal with a girl trying to find her place in a patriarchal tradition, a woman embracing the born-to-shop stereotype, a father teaching his three-year-old son a Yiddish song, etc. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)



Vanessa Williams, who has taken over the title role in "Kiss of the Spider Woman."

LONG RUNS

ANGELS IN AMERICA: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **FAMILY SECRETS:** Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. (Closes July 16.) . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Serious Fun!—Opening performances of the eighth annual edition of the festival, which will run through July 30. The Margaret Jenkins Dance Company presents the New York première of "The Gates (Far Away Near)," with musical accompaniment by the Paul Dresher ensemble. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. July 6-7 at 7:30.) . . . ¶ "Shlemiel the First," a musical about the imaginary town of Chelm, a village of fools invented by Isaac Bashevis Singer for his children's stories. Featuring the Klezmer Conservatory Band. (Reviewed in this issue.) (John Jay Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 58th St. July 7-8 at 8 and July 9 at 2 and 8. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.) . . . ¶ A number of poet-performers, including Reg E. Gaines, Tracie Morris, Maggie Estep, and Ed Morales, engage in a poetry slam (they read, the audience scores them) in "Nuyorican Poets Café Live! Aloud!" (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. July 9 at 7:30.)

DANCE

Royal Ballet—Opening performances of a two-week engagement. July 6 at 7, July 7 and July 9 at 2 and 8, and July 8 at 8: "The Sleeping Beauty." . . . ¶ July 11-12 at 8: "Tombeaux," "The Dream," and "The Judas Tree." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 19.)

Pilobolus—July 6 at 8 and July 9 at 2: "Collideoscope," solo from "Empty Suitor," "Shizen," and "Day 2." . . . ¶ July 7, July 9, and July 12, all at 8: "Untitled," "Pseudopodia," "Animundi," "Televisitation," and "Sweet Purgatory." . . . ¶ July 8 and July 11 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Alraune," "Vestidigitations" (New York première), "Walklyndon," and "Début C." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through July 30.)

Pilar Rioja—The renowned flamenco artist, presenting a program of Spanish dances. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. July 6-9 at 8 and July 10 at 3. Through July 17.)

Donald Byrd/The Group—In a collaborative work with the Blind Boys of Alabama, a gospel group. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 8 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—Opening performances of the Saratoga season. July 6 and July 8 at 8:15, and July 7 and July 9 at 2 and 8:15: "The Sleeping Beauty." . . . ¶ July 12 at 8:15: "Pastoral Dances," "Apollo," and "Fearful Symmetries." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs. 1-518 587-3330. Through July 23.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 6-7 at 8, July 8 at 8:30, and July 9 at 2 and 8:30: Mark Morris Dance Group, in a program consisting of "The Office" (company première), "A Spell," "A Lake," and "Lucky Charms." . . . ¶ July 8 at 8, July 9 at 5, and July 10 at 7: Tere O'Connor Dance. . . . ¶ July 12 at 8: Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. Through July 16. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

BLAIR DRAWSON

NIGHT LIFE

Twenty-five

BRADLEY'S, thank God, is going strong. In fact, it's twenty-five this year, making it the second-oldest jazz club in New York (after the Village Vanguard, which is fifty-nine). Bradley Cunningham and a partner took the place over when it was called the Stirrup and had Naugahyde banquettes. They removed the banquettes, put the famous tilted mirror over the bar, and renamed the club Bradley's, hoping it would complement Casey's, a fashionable jet-setters' hangout on Tenth Street. But nothing happened until Bradley bought an electric piano and hired a good journeyman pianist named Dave Frishberg. By 1972, Bradley's had caught on. It had even proliferated, becoming a kind of unofficial club for Bradley and his friends, a decent neighborhood bar-and-grill, and a piano-and-bass room where you could hear the likes of Teddy Wilson, Jimmy Rowles, Tommy Flanagan, Dave McKenna, Joanne Brackeen, Hank Jones, Kenny Barron, John Hicks, and, sporadically, Bradley himself, as an early-dinner pianist.

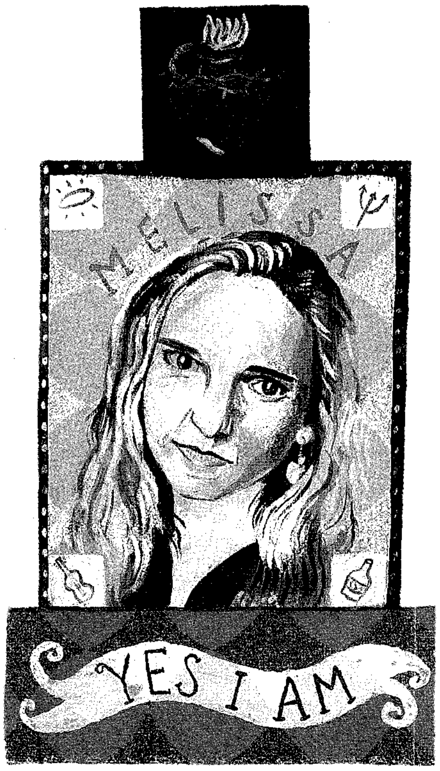
For a long time, Bradley's was a noisy place with a second-rate piano. Then the brilliant alto saxophonist Paul Desmond died and bequeathed his Baldwin concert grand to Bradley's, and Bradley—a big, funny, secretive, neolithic man with a thousand teeth and iron fists—decided that a place with a concert grand should be quiet when the musicians played. It was quiet.

In 1975, Bradley married Wendy Lee, one of his comely, compact, speedy waitresses. In 1988, Bradley, just sixty-three, died, and Wendy Cunningham took over; polishing, tightening, and hewing, she has made Bradley's into a durable, straight-ahead place. And she now uses horns and drums, and hires young players like Jacky Terrasson, Roy Hargrove, and Leon Parker. (Pete Malinverni leads a trio this week.)

Bradley used to appear at the club around 11 P.M., and hold court at Table 1, just beyond the bar. It's likely he still does.

CONCERTS

PHIL COLLINS—Having been everything a rock star could ever hope to be (solo artist, front man for Genesis, producer, actor, part-time drummer-for-hire, etc.), Phil Collins discharged his band and played all the instruments himself for his sixth solo album, "Both Sides" (1993). This is of interest not because Collins is such a tremendous musician but because "Both Sides" sounds exactly like every other Phil Collins record. It's the usual nerveless combination of mawkish up-tempo numbers and hopelessly earnest ballads. Expect the show to begin with a selection of slower material, and then sit back in awe as Collins accelerates into "party mode," as *Billboard* recently described the action. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 6-7 at 8.)



Melissa Etheridge at Jones Beach Theatre.

GIL SCOTT-HERON—In the seventies, while many of his R. & B. peers were blissfully succumbing to disco fever, singer-pianist Scott-Heron (who's also a poet and novelist) was fusing jazz and funk textures with sobering political rap. Now that socially conscious hip-hop artists have entered the pop charts en masse, the time feels right for a comeback; the recently released "Spirits," Scott-Heron's first album in twelve years, is a potent one. Performance artist Danny Hoch, whose acclaimed one-person show "Some People" ran at P.S. 122 last winter, shares the bill. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 7 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

SQUEEZE AND AIMEE MANN—Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook, the singer-songwriters responsible for the early-eighties pop classics "Tempted" and "Black Coffee in Bed," present a special acoustic show. Paul Carrack, who sang lead on "Tempted," and Keith Wilkinson will also be on hand. Fledgling pop goddess Aimee Mann will contribute backup vocals, in addition to performing her own set. With Rebecca Blasband. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. July 9 at 8.)

MELISSA ETHERIDGE—This raspy-voiced rock singer's coming out proves that a lesbian can sing heartland anthems just as lustily as anyone else. While the Bryan Adams approach is hardly cutting edge, Etheridge's latest album, "Yes I Am," is probably her best, and she does her arena-rousing thing with verve and conviction, giving boys and girls alike a reason to shout. With Billy Pilgrim. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 10 at 8.)

SISTER SLEDGE / CAROL DOUGLAS—World Financial Center plaza, Battery Park City. July 6 at 7:30. No tickets necessary. (Rain date, July 7.)

YANNI—With his symphony orchestra. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 7 at 8. . . . ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. July 8 at 8.)

JUDY MOWATT—With Worl-a-Girl. (Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St., Brooklyn. July 8 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

SARAH MCLACHLAN—With the Story. (Central Park SummerStage. July 9 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

THE STORY—With Annie Golden & Frank Carillo. (Prospect Park Band Shell. July 9 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

REGGAE SUNSPLASH—Featuring Steel Pulse, Maxi Priest, and Marcia Griffiths, among others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 9 at 8.)

JOHNNY VENTURA—With Ray Sepulveda. (Central Park SummerStage. July 10 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

BARBRA STREISAND—Madison Square Garden. July 10 and July 12 at 8.

CLUBS

BLARNEY STAR, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—July 15: An evening of button accordion, fiddle, and piano, with **TOM DUNNE** and **BRENDAN DOLAN.**

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On July 10-11, be sure to catch Irish singer-songwriter **LUKA BLOOM,** who has just released "Turf," his third album. In addition to writing enchanting songs, Bloom plays his "electro-acoustic" axe with a vengeance and is a witty, willing raconteur.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—July 8: **DOGFOOD.** July 9: **CODEINE.** . . . ¶ At CB's Gallery, July 6-8: **JOHN ZORN'S MASADA.** Masada is Zorn's chaotic and often haunting klezmer outfit, which for this performance features guitarist Marc Ribot and drummer Joey Barron.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—July 8-9: Downtown guitar hero **MARC RIBOT** performs. July 11: Violinist **BILLY BANG** presents an evening of hip-hop bebop, with **DAVID MURRAY.**

DUPLEX, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **LADY BUNNY** continues her extended run.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—The **GODFATHERS,** a London-based rock-and-R. & B. outfit, are here on July 12. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—July 10: The **VELDT.** On July 12: **ROSETTA STONE,** with Faith and the Muse, Das Ich, and Corpus Delicti. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side Blues. July 8: The **NEW YORK BLUESBUSTERS.**

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The Scottish band **SUPERSTAR** is here on July 6. Based in Glasgow, these lads put forth the sort of lush, wistful pop that inspires Brian Wilson comparisons. On July 8, catch Boston's **FUZZY,** another novice act notable for its precocious craftsmanship and lyrical arrangements—although these guys play their guitars a little louder.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—The **AUTEURS** play on July 7-8. This quartet is a true post-Kinks British pop band, folding acerbic sentiments into tasty melodies, a particularly strong feature of "Now I'm a Cowboy," the recently released follow-up to the group's well-received début, "New Wave" (1993). On July 9, check out another of last year's most promising new acts, the **DEVLINS.** This Irish band's first effort, "Drift" (1993), a collection of tautly atmospheric, superbly crafted songs, never got the push it deserved, but it has just been rereleased. This intimate venue is a great place for the Devlins to showcase their spare, insinuating tunes.

PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—**LESLEY GORE** continues through July 16. The Brooklyn-born Gore was a teen-age singing, songwriting sensation before Debbie Gibson was even a glimmer in her stage mother's eye. But while sappy sixties relics like "It's My Party" could certainly be called pre-Gibsonesque, Gore also produced savvy smokers like "You Don't Own Me." As an adult, she has continued to hone her pop craft, and will present some of the results—along with a few old chestnuts—in this revue. Closed Mondays.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—On July 7: **TOAD THE WET SPROCKET.** This alternately hard-rocking and jangling quartet from Santa Barbara—their deceptively frivolous name was lifted from a Monty Python skit—had their first hit two years ago with "All I Want," a lovely ballad from their wonderful third album, "Fear." Their new album, "Dulcinea," has several excellent songs that may follow suit. On July 8: the **LEMONHEADS,** with **BUFFALO TOM** and **GIGOLO AUNTS.** The devil-may-care Lemonheads, featuring the stud-puppet singer and songwriting savant Evan Dando, have a long string of great songs to their credit. All three of these bands make it worth visiting this grunge oasis.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—**SAMBA NOVA** is here on July 9. On July 12: an evening of reggae, with **CULTURE** and **PATO BENTON.** Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—**TONI CHILDS** stops by on July 7. Childs' throaty, quavering alto is a powerfully emotive instrument, well suited to the singer-songwriter's ambient but purposeful folk-rock. Her current album, "The Woman's Boat," is shorter on pop craftsmanship and longer on bombast than its two predecessors, but Childs' delivery remains fiercely, achingly true. July 11: Catch the remarkable **ZAP MAMA,** with Dana Bryant. Zap Mama, an all-female Belgian-African vocal quintet, uses a variety of languages (French, Spanish, Pygmy, Zairean, among others) to create dense, richly textured melodies and hypnotic polyrhythms. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. **SON SEALS** performs on July 8-9.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—**LISA LOEB & NINE STORIES** arrive on July 7. Twenty-six-year-old Loeb is the pouty, fey-voiced slacker babe of the moment. In her video for the single "Stay," from the "Reality Bites" soundtrack, she roams through what looks like an artist's loft in SoHo, in a little black dress and big, clunky spectacles, whining about some guy who can't *communicate* with her. Juliana Hatfield, meet your competition.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—July 6-9: Singer **HELEN KARDON** performs show tunes in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—July 6: **LLOYD PRICE** begins a two-week engagement.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. ([illegible]49-2228)—The **ROBERT MILLER** group plays on July 12. Sundays belong to **PETE (LA ROCA) SIMS** and his nineties swing sextet.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Through July 10: the **PHIL WOODS** quintet, featuring **BOBBY HUTCHERSON,** and the **JACKIE MC LEAN** sextet. Although Woods and McLean share the same horn (alto saxophone) and the same main influence (Charlie Parker), these musicians couldn't sound more different. Woods is a poised bop classicist; McLean, a heated improviser with avant urges. Still, both have bands that complement their style of virtuosity. In a strange twist, Bobby Hutcherson—the dazzling modernist who in the sixties ran in the same circles as McLean—will be a guest soloist with Woods. Dining.

THE NIGHT FANTASTIC

DANCE CLUBS—cavernous spaces where mobs of people shake and groove to prerecorded sounds—provide a few things often missing from big-city life: relief from low-ceilinged apartments and workplace regimentation; a chance to flaunt clothes, bodies, and sexuality; and an opportunity to be (or simply pretend to be, which is the essence of attitude) anything from a pierced-and-tattooed Riot Grrrl to a transvestite dripping with pearls. What follows is a list of clubs that have prevailed for more than a month or two without becoming dangerously passé, along with suggested nights on which to visit them. In general, the scene doesn't get started until after midnight, so a long nap is a sensible prerequisite for a night in the disco demimonde.

USA—218 W. 47th St. (869-6103)—This Times Square dance emporium, which opened its doors in 1993, is the Macy's of night clubs: it's overwhelmingly vast and a snap to get lost in. The décor on the main floor is a sanitized-for-your-protection reproduction of the seediest parts of cities everywhere: there are fake red-light-district marquees and soft-porn peep-show booths. The upper floors feature kinky vinyl couches, a futuristic room designed by Thierry Mugler, a seventy-foot tube slide that runs from the balcony to the dance floor, and lots of disreputable nooks and crannies. Fridays and Saturdays are the most popular and heterogeneous nights, featuring house-spinning d.j. Hex Hector.

Rebar, 127 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (627-1680)—This small Chelsea club, christened last year on Halloween, takes its name from the ridged steel rods (known as rebar, for reinforcing bars) that decorate the bar. On Tuesdays, the fare is funk, disco, and house oldies spun by d.j. Derek Corley. On Fridays, it's so packed that dancers have to limit themselves to a small bobbing motion. On Sundays, d.j. Jules, who has earned the epithet "soul turtle" for including slow soul tunes in his sets, serves up a bipolar (new and old, slow and fast, East and West Coast) mixture of hip-hop, reggae, and soul.

Tribal Lounge, 22 Seventh Ave. S., at Leroy St. (929-0006)—This West Village space has been a stop-and-go affair for the last few years. It was the Milk Bar for a while, in the late eighties, and then Le Vingt Deux for what seemed a heartbeat, in 1993. Now it's two tiny floors done up in a low-budget jungle motif, with a comically small dance floor downstairs. Tuesday's new party is called Free Sex, and Wednesday is Women's Night, a predominately lesbian dance scene. Club Soda, Saturday's fizzy no-cover-charge party, featuring house and funk classics remixed by d.j. Emjay, hasn't gone flat yet.

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—If you've never been to Nell's grand faux parlor, don't let on. Even if the hipness quotient will never be as high as it was when the place opened, in 1986, this Victorian-style club—with its overstuffed couches and beaded chandeliers—has lately benefitted from a micro-revival of eighties style. The basement disco features an eclectic throng of downtown kids dancing to thumping funk and techno.

Tunnel, 220 Twelfth Ave., at 27th St. (695-7292)—This glam eighties hot spot rose from its own ashes and reopened last October. The club will soon replace its current theme—industrial enchanted forest—with an aural-interactive one entailing echo chambers and a wall-of-sound installation. Meanwhile, it's an apt site for a Friday-night party called Puzzled?! Watching skateboarders zooming across a caged-in ramp, pondering the diorama of a life-size grizzly bear rooting through a trash can, or hanging out in the aqua-tiled bathroom—a gender-blind grotto equipped with ten urinals, twenty-eight stalls, and one fully stocked bar—can produce a sensation of happy bewilderment.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—Forty thousand square feet of naughty fun. This one-and-a-half-year-old club, owned by the four Ballinger brothers, Canadian farm boys turned swingers, has two spacious ballrooms, several smaller dance rooms, and a coffee shop. You can even get a haircut at a card table cum barbershop, or purchase a platinum-blond wig at Miss Francesca's boutique in the ladies' room. The music is also full service: hip-hop, reggae, underground house, and frat-boy rock. Wednesday's drag party, Queen, hosted by Reign Voltaire, is a weekly indoor Wigstock. Psychedelic Thursdays, featuring grunge rock and cheap beer, is one of the club's mainstays, but the Make-Up Room, on Fridays, has its own charms, with an energetic crowd of bar-dancing transvestites and hilarious, self-parodying fashion victims.

Rouge, 131 E. 54th St. (421-5304)—The Saturday-night scene at this small upscale club is a variation on the Tatou/Au Bar theme: the revellers are generally in their late twenties or early thirties and appear to be financially liquid. The men dress in suits or sports coats, and there are lots of skinny women in tight sequinned minis. The décor is plush, with Empire-style chiffon drapery, purple velvet banquettes, and, for some reason, a few carrousel horses. The music is standard seventies disco and pop—the music of the clientele's coming-of-age.

The Roxy, 515 W. 18th St. (645-5156)—This way-out-West club has pride of place as one of the longest-lasting gay-male dance spots in Manhattan. The Tuesday (gay) and Wednesday (straight) dance-skate parties return to the Roxy's roots—before 1988, it was a plain, old-fashioned roller rink. On Tuesdays, the d.j.s play dance house, and on Wednesdays, everything from house to Top Forty hits to disco classics.

Save the Robots, Avenue B between 2nd and 3rd Sts. (No phone)—To say the weekend party starts late is a gross understatement: this after-hours institution doesn't even open until most of the others clubs in town have shut down. It's the end of the line for über-nightcrawlers, who arrive here starting at 4 A.M. In keeping with the decadent hour, the theme seems to be "bombed-out Asian brothel." There are d.j.s upstairs and down, and the dawn-of-the-living-dead crowd tends to dance in the limp, swaying fashion of people too exhausted and too blown out of their minds to realize that it's time to go home.

NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—July 6-9: **PETE MALINVERNI, LEROY WILLIAMS,** and **UGONNA OKEGWO.** July 10: The **KEVIN HAYS** trio. July 11: **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and **CECIL MC BEE** begin a one-week run. Dining.

CAJUN, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—In the Bemelmans Bar, **KURT WIETING** presides at the piano.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—July 5-10: **UNPREDICTABLE NATURE. MOSE ALLISON** arrives on July 12. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **NUDES** are in on July 12. Singer-guitarist Walter Parks was desperately seeking a cellist when he put an ad in the *Village Voice* a few years back. Stephanie Winters, who also sings, phoned Parks up and was immediately hired. The Nudes played their first downtown gig in April of 1991, and have been making beautiful, jazz-inflected folk music ever since. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. The **VALERY PONOMAREV** quartet arrives on July 12.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. July 6-12: Piano and vibes with **RONNY WHYTE** and **WARREN CHIASSON.**

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—July 11: A double bill of guitar music with the **BRAD SCHOEPPACH** trio and the **BEN MONDER** trio.

LE MADELEINE, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—July 10: Jazz guitar with **PAUL MEYERS.** Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. The rest of the week **VERNEL BAGNERIS** salutes Jelly Roll Morton. Closed Sundays.

METROPOLIS, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—Trumpeter **CHARLES TOLLIVER** is here with a quartet on July 8-9. Tolliver sat out the better part of the last fifteen or so years, but now he's back, and as willing as ever to use his own horn to relay the fevered modal message of John Coltrane. On Monday nights, catch **CON-TRI-BUTION,** a reggae-tinged jazz collective that transcends genre.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to the Kit McClure sextet; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. **TERUMASA HINO** performs through July 10. Beginning July 12: the **CARL ALLEN** quintet. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—July 6-10: The **ROY MERIWETHER** trio. July 12: The **JOE BUSHKIN** trio arrives.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **DON CHERRY** quartet is in through July 10. Cherry brings wanderlust to the bandstand, mixing the sounds of Africa, Latin America, and the Orient with the music of Thelonious Monk, Ornette Coleman, and Cherry's own hybrid compositions. Spreading his talents amongst the pocket trumpet, piano, voice, and doussń goun (an African stringed instrument) hasn't sharpened Cherry's focus, but his open-eared universality is disarming. July 11: The **LOREN SCHOENBERG** jazz orchestra holds sway.

ART

Nostalgie de la Peinture

JULIAN SCHNABEL'S early plate paintings, with their thick encrustations of paint mixed up with broken crockery, remain archetypal images of eighties art. By the close of the decade, the artistic temper of the times had swung back to the cooler, more ironic practices of earlier years, but Schnabel was not one to be left behind. Backed by the institutional weight of Pace Gallery—which, since its merger with Wildenstein last year, is the richest and most powerful art gallery in the world—he has settled into the somewhat preposterous role of Old Master.

Earlier this year, Pace showed Schnabel's new "Boni Lux" series, and it is currently showing (142 Greene Street; through September 9) the quizzically titled "Jane Birkin paintings," of 1990. (The English actress's name is scrawled on two of these huge, shaped canvases.) The "Boni Lux" paintings seemed like standard Schnabel fare—canvases pullulating with a decrepit de Kooningesque gesturalism. The Jane Birkin paintings are an altogether weirder affair. For one thing, they are almost completely lacking painterly exuberance: clouds of white, pink, and blood-red paint mingle listlessly with pools of gesso and resin on

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sailcloth canvases. There's a palpable sense of indistinct nostalgia here, and perhaps that's why Schnabel chose a half-remembered former model and starlet as his muse.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Dali: The Early Years." Several paintings and drawings from the collection of the Spanish Surrealist (1904-89), who brought you melting watches. The earliest work predates Dali's student days in Madrid; the latest is from 1931. . . . ¶ Forty-four clarinets from a private collection are on display in the musical-instruments gallery. . . . ¶ "American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915." John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt are included in the first major exhibition to focus on the similarities of these turn-of-the-century schools of painting. Through July 24. . . . ¶ A companion exhibit to the above, "American Impressionism and Realism: Drawings, Prints, and Photographs" features work from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ Twenty-seven paintings by Sidney Nolan (1917-92), an Australian who chronicled the adventures of his countryman Ned Kelly, a nineteenth-century outlaw. . . . ¶ "Waist Not," a Costume Institute exhibit, proposes the waist as the defining element of the fashion silhouette, offering examples from the eighteenth century to the present. . . . ¶ "The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. (There is a concurrent show of Wright works at the Guggenheim Museum.) (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Masterpieces from the David and Peggy Rockefeller Collection: Manet to Picasso" includes Cézanne's "Still-Life with Fruit Dish" and Matisse's "Interior with Girl Reading." . . . ¶ Luc Courchesne's "Family Portrait" is an interactive video-and-computer installation in which the viewer can address set questions via computer to any of the eight people (a group of friends in Marseilles) Courchesne has captured on video. . . . ¶ Prints by Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, and Popova are part of "Master Prints from the Collection." Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ "Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties." Polly Apfelbaum and Andrea Zittel are among the artists represented. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Oskar Kokoschka, Works on Paper: The Early Years, 1897-1917." . . . ¶ "The Tradition of the New: Post-War Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection." . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright's Designs for the Guggenheim Museum." (There is a concurrent show of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum.) (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Rolywholyover A Circus." John Cage (1912-92) took his title from Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" and used, among other things, a computerized version of the "I Ching" to create a circus. Cage said, "The basic idea is that the exhibition would change so much that if you came back a second time, you wouldn't recognize it." It includes a rotating exhibit of work by fifty artists, including Rauschenberg and Joseph Cornell; *enso* scrolls; an interactive computer installation; an object each from the permanent collections of several New York museums; and a media room with a program that is always changing. For schedule information, call 423-3836. Through Aug. 7. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist, who occupies a small but secure niche in the canon of twentieth-century American art. A celebrant of the brash energies of industrialism and technological innovation, he painted the Brooklyn Bridge repeatedly in the late teens and the twenties. Coming from an acolyte of modernity, it's often a surprisingly drab picture—cramped in composition and rife with sooty shadows. This show emphasizes the immigrant experience; Stella is the perpetual outsider, stranded between the traditions of the old country and the amnesiac temper of the New World. . . . ¶ "Edward Hopper and Jack Pierson: American Dreaming." As part of the Collection in Context series, Pierson has paired some of his own work with paintings and works on paper by Hopper (1882-1967). (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Louise Bourgeois: The Locus of Memory, Works 1982-1993." An expanded version of the sculptor's 1993 Venice Biennale exhibit, with some twenty-five works made from Carrara marble, rubber, wood, bronze, steel, and glass. There are also thirty works on paper.

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ART–Cont'd

Bourgeois has long been a subterranean force in contemporary art, but in the last decade her haunted and often intensely theatrical sculptural investigations of memory, dread, and desire have become key works in the current artistic climate. Through July 31. . . . ¶ From the museum's collection, samples of twentieth-century decorative arts and industrial design, including studio pottery and an Electrolux vacuum cleaner. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Bauhaus Workshops: 1919-33." Furniture, metalwork, glass, textiles, and ceramics made by disciples of the German school of architecture and design, including Mies van der Rohe, Joseph Albers, and Marianne Brandt. . . . ¶ "Sculptural Concerns: Contemporary American Metalworking." Jewelry, sculpture, and furniture, among other craftwork. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria, Queens—"Muky's New York: Photographer to the Postwar Film Renaissance," pictures taken between 1957 and 1982 by Muky Munkacsi for New York film productions. Included are studio portraits of Gary Cooper, Carmen Miranda, and other Hollywood stars. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 4, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6.)

Arsenal Gallery, Central Park, Fifth Ave. at 64th St.—"Islands and Bridges: The Past, Present, and Future of Randall's and Wards Islands." Through July 29. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:30.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A thirty-eight-inch bronze Buddha from Thailand is the centerpiece of an exhibit of some fifty related sculptures—of Maitreyas, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas—which share certain postures and stylistic conventions. Closer inspection reveals the differences between the Khmer, Mon, and Shrivijayan types. Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bard Graduate Center, 18 W. 86th St.—"Cast Iron from Central Europe, 1800-50." Decorative cast-iron objects, such as jewelry, incense burners, and sewing implements. Through Aug. 7. (Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30.)

Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Ellis Island—"Immigrant Health Traditions" documents home remedies and other household medical practices, with, for instance, objects found in the medicine cabinet (like acupuncture equipment from Japan). (Open daily, from 9:30 to 5.)

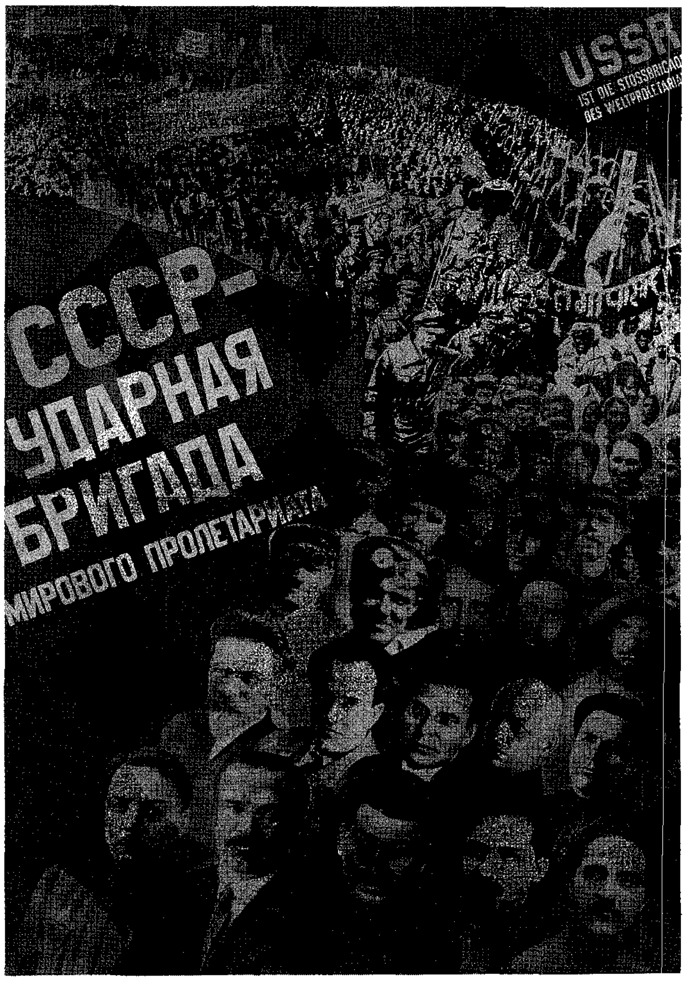
Empire–Fulton Ferry State Park, New Dock St. at the East River, Brooklyn—The Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition's annual outdoor sculpture show takes place at the base of the Brooklyn Bridge. Through July 9. (Open daily, from 10 to 8.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance." Gold, silver, bronze, and lead depictions of Lorenzo de' Medici and Dürer, among others. . . . ¶ Sèvres porcelain, Limoges enamel, and paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Whistler, and El Greco are all on view in this former residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—"The Books of Pierre Lecuire, 1953-93." Thirty-six art books produced by the French publisher. Through July 29. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Worthy Use of Summer: Jewish Summer Camping in America." A historical and ethnographic study of the recreational camps that emerged at the beginning of this century . . . . ¶ A companion exhibit to the above, "Camp Pinecliff, 1981: Photographs by Gay Block." (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts" focusses on the Gospel as the central cultural artifact of the Armenian people. The exhibit provides a history of the area, particularly of its religious struggles. Enormous pains were taken to illustrate the manuscripts and protect them from marauders; it was thought that therein was salvation for book owner and maker. The approximately ninety manuscripts on display offer a variety of illustrative techniques, which range from the folksy to the ornate, executed in mostly mineral-based colors that are remarkably vibrant. The details—animals woven into ornamentation, or facial expressions, for example—reward scrutiny. Several framed pages from "The Gladzor Gospel" (completed in 1307) allow visitors to see more than one page at a time. Selections include a tenth-century Gospel and items dating from the Armenian diaspora of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There's also a display case detailing the particulars of binding and pigment production. Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)



"SSSR—Shock Brigade Proletariat of the World" (1931), in a show of Soviet graphics at Schickler.

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—To celebrate its recent reopening and its twenty-fifth anniversary, the museum has organized a three-part show, "Artists Talk Back: Visual Conversations with El Museo." The first exhibit, "Reclaiming History," focusses on Latin-American history. . . . ¶ "Revelaciones: The Art of Manuel Alvarez Bravo" includes more than a hundred black-and-white photographs by this Mexican artist. Through July 31. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, noon to 7.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Western Artists/African Art." An exhibit of African objects that define African art for Western artists. Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"New York Beauties: Quilts from the Empire State." For the museum's New York Quilt Project, Quilt Days were held in various counties to locate, document, and preserve quilts. Of the approximately six thousand examples obtained, twenty-two are on view, the most flamboyant of which is Elizabeth Hamilton's one-of-a-kind Teaching Quilt (1934). Animals, tools, fruits and vegetables, and the like, all in bright red, are stitched topsy-turvy on a white ground, with a boy and girl on a seesaw in the center and a border of letters and words. Elementary but pleasing. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Stickball Hall of Fame" includes a film of a stickball game, photographs from 1898 to the present, and jerseys. . . . ¶ "Beals' Bohemians: Photographs by Jessie Tarbox Beals." Greenwich Village during the early nineteen-hundreds as captured by America's first woman photojournalist. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"New in the Berg Collection, 1991-1993." Manuscripts that were given to the library during this period include Nabokov's papers and several poems by Anne Sexton. . . . ¶ "German Literary Landmarks: From the Enlightenment to the Romantic Era" documents the rise of modern German literature (from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century), with first editions of works by Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist. Children's books from the same period will also be on display. Through Aug. 6. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Works from every period of the Japanese-American sculptor's life (1904-88) are installed in a garden and open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 [illegible])

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—"South Africa: The Cordoned Heart." Photo-essays on the working and living conditions of black South Africans. . . . ¶ Photographs of Nelson Mandela's June, 1990, visit to New York City. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

South Street Seaport Museum, 207 Front St.—"Ship, Sea, and Sky: The Marine Art of James Edward Buttersworth." Sixty paintings by Buttersworth (1817-94), an English immigrant. (Open daily, 10 to 5.)

Socrates Sculpture Park, Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City—"Bongo Park '94" includes work by Gunilla Bandolin, Mark di Suvero, and Nancy Rubins. (Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

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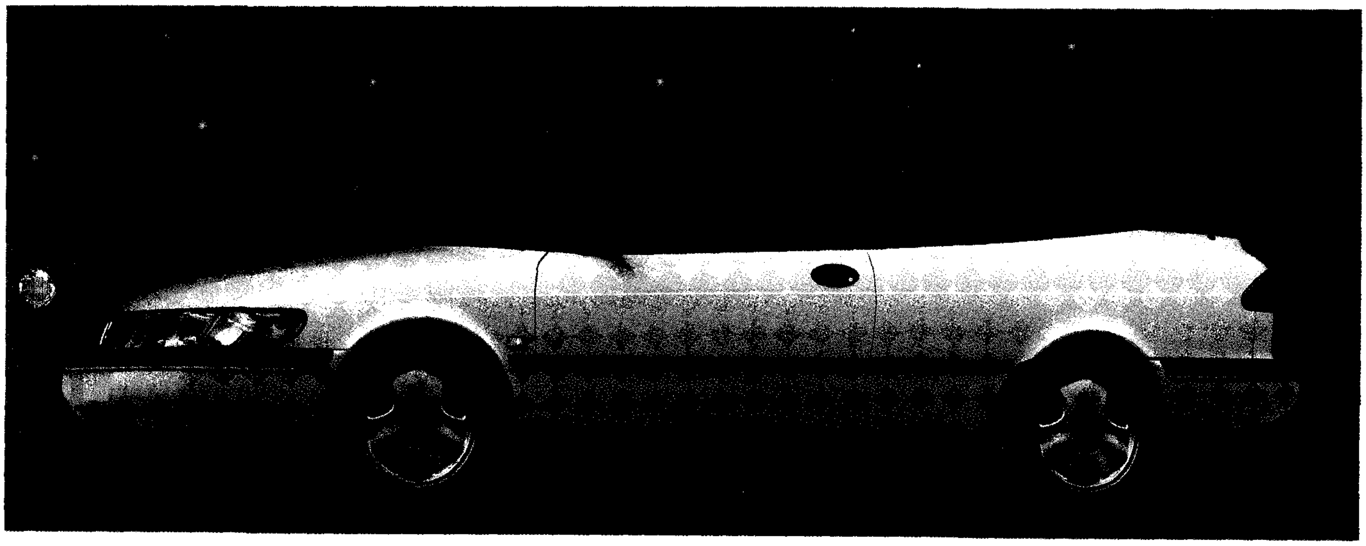

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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Ann Agee / Julie Trager—Elegantly painted porcelain sex toys, by an artist whose work was featured in the "Bad Girls" show at the New Museum last winter. / Coarsely textured fibre sculptures. Opens July 7. Through Aug. 6. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

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Sam Francis / Judy Pfaff—At seventy-one, Sam Francis is still at it, producing tasteful, buffed Abstract Expressionist canvases that please the eye but do not overtax the mind. The large, dripped, candy-colored acrylics have a certain classical equipoise; more interesting are a series of wood-grained monotypes with puddles of pure color. / Judy Pfaff's extravagant, surrealistic assemblages are altogether meatier. In "Early Herbal," a sheet of paper is burned, oil-stained, and washed with watercolor to create an effect not unlike a Ming landscape, dreamily poetic yet palpable. Through July 15. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Per Kirkeby—"Blackboard Paintings," a series of oil-and-pastel-on-Masonite paintings by this Danish abstractionist. With their alternately fluid and jagged gestural scribbles, suggesting the styles of both de Kooning and Twombly, Kirkeby's may be the best-looking new paintings in town. Through July 9. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

René Magritte (1898-1967)—"Le Domaine Enchanté," a suite of eight paintings by the Belgian Surrealist that served as the model for his largest single work, a mural installed in the Chandelier Room of the casino at Knokke-le-Zoute, Belgium. Many of Magritte's famous, poster-ready images are included: it's like a mini-retrospective within a single work. Through July 22. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Rebecca Welz—Whereas Welz's previous, more sculptural works in Plexiglas have the simplicity of origami—she spent two years of her childhood in Japan—these recent wall hangings are concerned with the beauty and purity of color and light. Small (5 x 7 inch) oil-on-Plexiglas paintings have been wired together in vertical rows and hung from a horizontal wooden rod, a construction reminiscent of Japanese armor. Each panel is an abstract examination of color, but together, intensified by the passage of light through the translucent paint, the effect is spiritual and serene. Through July 29. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Group Show—The standout here is Canadian artist Paterson Ewen, who has created a suite of *faux-naïf* views of outer space. Little tin circles are nailed down for planets, accompanied by doodle galaxies and tadpole comets. James Hyde fills glass boxes with big gloopy gobs of paint that resemble brilliantly stained offal. At the rear of the gallery are some lithographs by de Chirico. Through July 29. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Sun and Sea"—De Nagy's summer show of watercolors takes its title from a work by Fairfield Porter. Darragh Park's large, lucid landscape, "Gloria's Remains," is a lyrical tour de force of watercoloristic transparency, the best among the contemporary works exhibited here. There is a gloomy, portentous landscape, "Promontory," by the obscure American Romantic painter Louis Eilshemius (1864-1941), which looks like the perfect set for an opera heroine's death leap. The most interesting work is the most technically inept: a clumsy, labored, and utterly charming picture of a Key West schoolhouse by Elizabeth Bishop. Charles Demuth, Arthur Dove, Red Grooms, and John Marin are among the other artists represented. Through July 28. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Paintings and drawings from the fifties through the eighties. Through Aug. 12. (C & M, 45 E. 78th St.)

Jacob Kainen—Forty abstract paintings, from 1934 to 1992. Through Oct. 1. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 51st St. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Donald Lipski—An array of small wall-mounted sculptures (circa 1978-91) composed of such everyday objects as razor blades, scissors, rubber bands, and cigarettes. Over all, a mood of slightly tiresome whimsy prevails. Through July 29. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

De Hirsh Margules (1989-1965)—Watercolors and oil paintings by this Romanian-born artist. Through July 29. (Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave. at 57th St.)

Chi Gyun Oh—Impressionistic cityscapes by this Korean-American artist. Through July 29. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Anniversary—A show in tribute to Otto Kallir (1894-1978), who founded the gallery in 1939. Included are paintings, drawings, and prints by Oskar Kokoschka, Morris Hirshfield, and Emil Nolde. Through Sept. 2. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

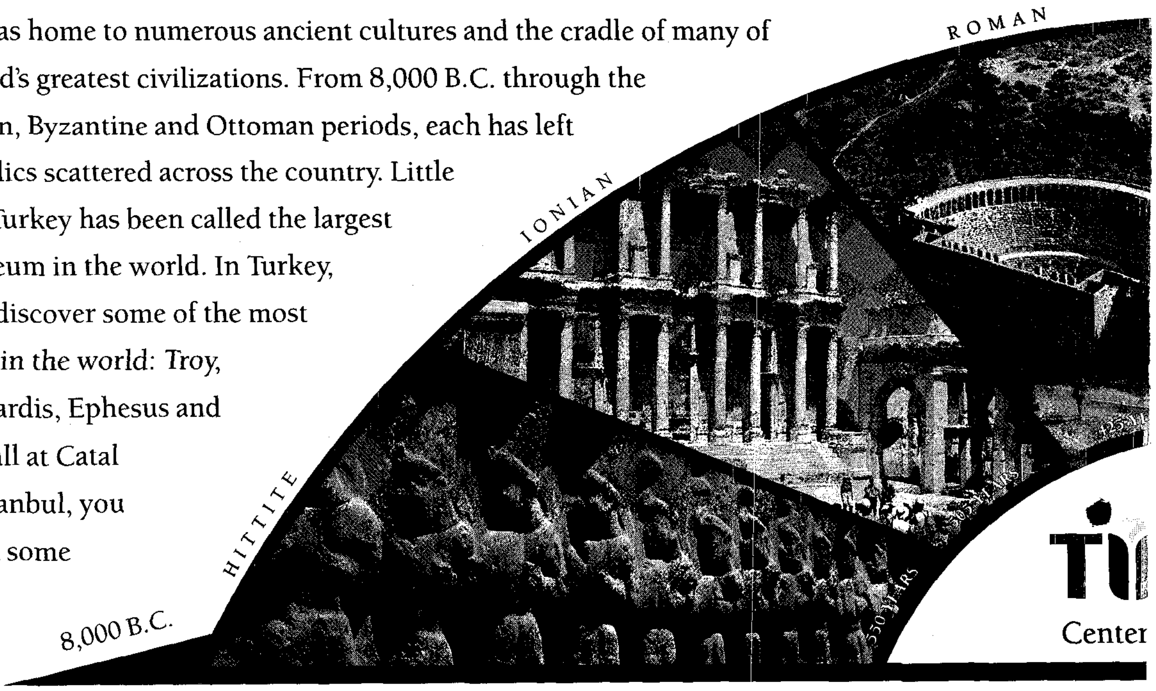
"Graphic Design in Revolutionary Russia"—An exhibition of photographs, drawings, and posters by Gustav Klucis, Alexander Rodchenko, and others. Through Aug. 26. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

On Paper—Work by four artists—Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, Alfonso Ossorio, and Anne Ryan—that pay tribute to the work of Douglass Morse Howell, a great papermaker. Through July 22. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

"Who Needs a Bathing Suit Anyway?"—A group show featuring work by Milton Avery, Paul Cadmus, and Jared French. It explores nudity in American art. Through Aug. 17. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

THE WORLD'S LARG

Turkey was home to numerous ancient cultures and the cradle of many of the world's greatest civilizations. From 8,000 B.C. through the Hittite, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman periods, each has left fascinating relics scattered across the country. Little wonder that Turkey has been called the largest open air museum in the world. In Turkey, you will also discover some of the most ancient cities in the world: Troy, Pergamum, Sardis, Ephesus and the oldest of all at Catal Höyük. In Istanbul, you will marvel at some of the most



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GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

RITA ACKERMANN—Acrylic line drawings of nymphets engaged in a variety of activities, from frolicking to taking heroin. Opens July 8. Through Aug. 12. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

JEF BOURGEAU—Video assemblages that address life at the end of the twentieth century. Opens July 7. Through Aug. 26. (LedisFlam, 130 Prince St.)

LISA MACKIE—Paintings and works on paper. Opens July 7. Through July 29. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

•

"UNHOLY WARS" / KONSTANTIN KAKANIAS—In "Unholy Wars," a group show featuring paintings by Manuel Ocampo, Arthur Cohen, and Christian Schumann, homegrown surrealism mingles with album-cover graphics, touching on themes of psychic and physical violence, crazy religiosity, and hallucinogenic rapture. / In the gallery's project room, a series of ink or gouache-on-paper works by Konstantin Kakanias, who specializes in sex and mayhem for the toddler set. Small children, often dressed in demonic-bunny costumes, indulge in torture, sodomy, murder, and assorted satanic rituals. Winnie-the-Pooh meets Goya. Through July 16. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

KIM AND SIMON DEITCH—Some seventy original pencil sketches, layouts, inked pages, and hand-colored prints from a comic-book series about the Mishkin brothers—a cartoonist and an executive working in the early days of the animation industry—whose lives revolve around the cartoon star Waldo the Cat. Through July 30. (Four Color Images, 524 Broadway.)

MICHAEL HEIZER—Stone sculptures hang from massive steel cables, and roughhewn boulders have been set into the walls and floor. Through Aug. 15. (Ace, 275 Hudson St., at Spring St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6.)

HENRY MOORE (1898-1986)—An exhibition that features "Reclining Connected Forms," one of Moore's last monumental sculptures. Through Sept. 10. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

BRUCE NAUMAN AND H. C. WESTERMANN (1922-1981)—Drawings that show Westermann's influence on Nauman. Through July 15. (Markey, 55 Vandam St. Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 2.)

KATIE REINHARDT—Paintings that incorporate the elements of English country life, in a style the artists calls "naïve realism." Through July 28. (F.D.R., 670 Broadway.)

JULIAN SCHNABEL—Paintings from 1990, devoted to the English actress Jane Birkin. Through Sept. 9. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

RICHARD SERRA—"Weight and Measure" (1994), a series of large-scale paint-stick-on-hiromi-paper drawings that were executed with the specific spatial dimensions of the gallery in mind. Serra, the master of monumental sculpture (remember "Tilted Arc"?), manages to endow drawing with an almost geological heft. Through July 30. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St.)

ROB WYNNE—Thrift-shop clothing stitched with poetry and mounted on hangers. Through July 22. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl.)

"A FLOOR IN A BUILDING IN BROOKLYN"—A show curated by Chuck Close that explores the work of eight artists sharing a floor in a Greenpoint factory building. Through July 30. (Anderson, 476 Broome St.)

"DRAWN IN THE 1970s"—Works on paper by Richard Artschwager, Allen Ruppersbury, Richard Tuttle, and others. Through Aug. 12. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

"STONEWALL"—Works by thirty gay and lesbian artists dealing with the first quarter century of gay liberation. Through July 23. (White Columns, 154 Christopher St. Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ART KANE—Forty years of work by a photographer best known for his landscape and fashion work. Through Aug. 12. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

THOMAS RUFF—Photographs of buildings designed by the Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron. Through Sept. 9. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

MICHAEL A. SMITH—Recent nudes and landscapes. Through July 23. (Bace, 39 Wooster St.)

W. EUGENE SMITH—Images by a photographer best known for his photo-essays in *Life*. Through Aug 19. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

"FLOWERS"—A group show featuring work by William Abranowicz, Walker Evans, Graciela Iturbide, and others. Through Aug. 5. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

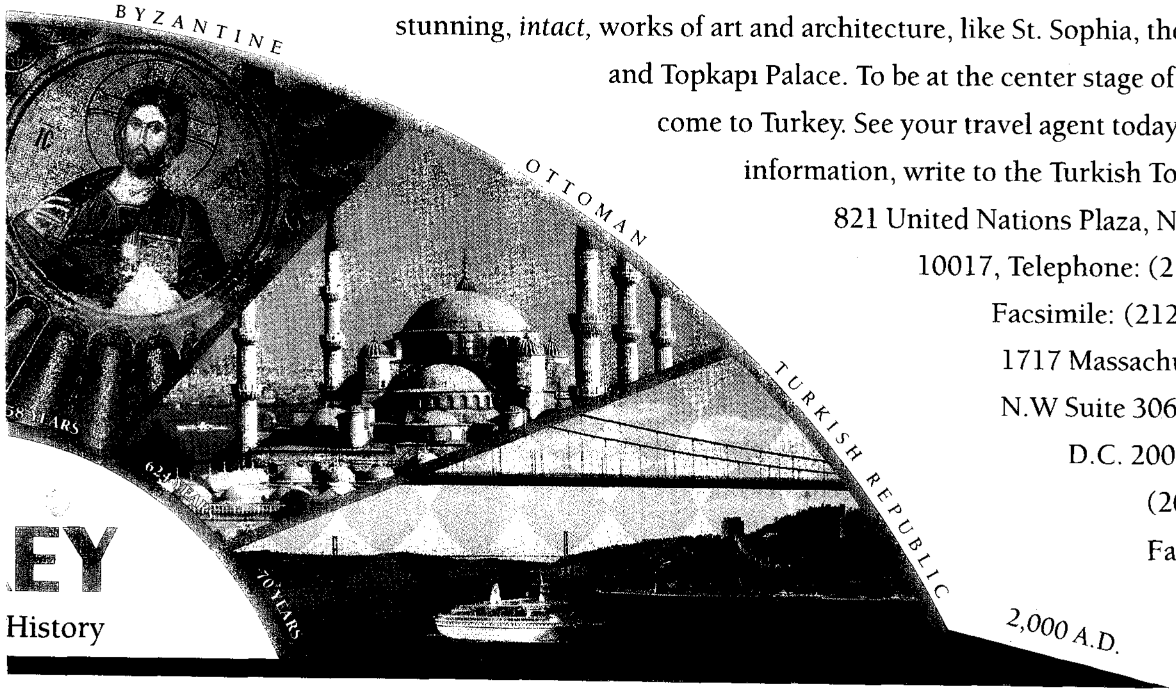
"PEACE, LOVE AND ROCK 'N' ROLL (THE SIXTIES)"—A group show featuring work by Charles Gatewood, Shelly Rusten, and Burk Uzzle. Through July 30. (292 Gallery, 120 Wooster St.)

"VISIONS OF MODERNITY"—Photographs taken in the Peruvian Andes between 1900 and 1930. Through Aug. 10. (Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Henri Cartier-Bresson: Hommage." (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—Photographs commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of D Day. Through July 10. . . . ¶ An exhibition of contemporary Scandinavian photography. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the American Museum of the Moving Image, the Jewish Museum, el Museo del Barrio, the Museum of the City of New York, and the Schomburg Center.)



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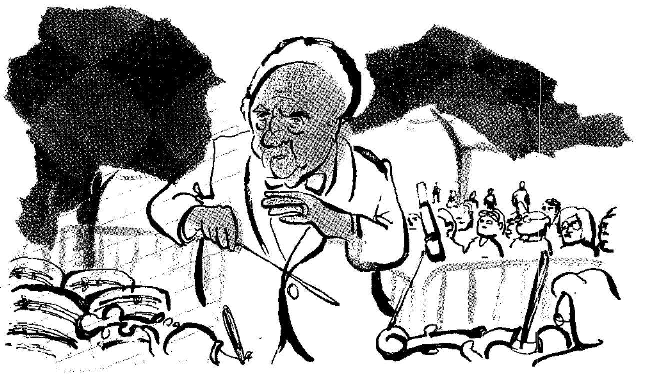
CLASSICAL MUSIC

Seven-Year Niche

The conductor Vincent La Selva can tick off the titles of Verdi's operas as securely as a catechumen reciting the books of the Bible: "'Oberto,' 'Un Giorno di Regno,' 'Nabucco,' 'I Lombardi' . . ." This week he launches the New York Grand Opera's seven-year-long chronological survey of all twenty-eight of Verdi's operas, plus the composer's Requiem, which will serve as the project's finale, on January 27, 2001, the exact centennial of Verdi's death. He continues through the next handful—" 'Ernani,' 'I Due Foscari,' 'Giovanna d'Arco,' 'Alzira,' 'Attila' "—before faltering. "Darn," he says, "I always forget numbers ten and eleven. Oh, right, 'Macbeth' and 'I Masnadieri.'" No cause for alarm; at the rate of four operas per summer, he won't need to focus on those two until 1996.

Surprisingly, a "complete Verdi" has never before been attempted, not even in Italy. And since the New York Grand Opera performs free of charge in Central Park, this unprecedented effort is within reach of even those New Yorkers who might feel nervous about entering one of the big houses at Lincoln Center. La Selva is especially proud to be able to present the works in fully staged productions, thanks to an ingeniously designed unit set whose interchangeable pieces can take the form of a crusader's castle, a Parisian salon, an Egyptian tomb—whatever. But the prospect of encompassing the whole of Verdi would be exciting even without staging. "There's greatness in every one of Verdi's operas," La Selva maintains. "Right from the very beginning—even in 'Oberto,' which he wrote when he was only twenty-five—Verdi's music has a drama, an energy, a drive that's all his own. He had the ability to excite people."



Vincent La Selva conducts the New York Grand Opera.

MARCELLUS HALL

OPERA

New York Grand Opera—The company's seven-year-long survey of all Verdi's operas opens with a staging of "Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio"; with soprano Katherine Johnson, mezzo-soprano Carolyn Sebron, tenor Edward Perretti, and baritone Theodore Lambrinos. Vincent La Selva conducts. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 6 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Chinese Operas—Li Bao-chun is featured in "The Golden Brick" (a Peking opera) and "Crossing the Lake" (a Kun opera). (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. July 7-8 at 7:30, July 9 at 2 and 7:30, and July 10 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Mostly Mozart—At Avery Fisher Hall. July 6: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Haydn," Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" Overture, and Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 4 ("Mozartiana"), as well as arias by Haydn, Gluck, and Mozart (with baritone Thomas Hampson), and Chopin's "Variations on 'Là ci darem la mano'" (featuring pianist Shura Cherkassky). (Avery Fisher Hall. July 5 at 8.) . . . ¶ July 7: The Cleveland String Quartet plays Beethoven's G-Major Quartet (Op. 18, No. 2), Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet (with Jon Kimura Parker), and Schubert's String Quintet (with cellist Janos Starker). . . . ¶ July 8-9: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin" (including a movement newly orchestrated by David Diamond), Mozart's Symphony No. 36 (the "Linz"), and Beethoven's Triple Concerto (featuring violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, cellist Antonio Meneses, and pianist Cecile Licad). . . . ¶ July 11: Pianist Rosalyn Tureck performs Bach's Aria and Variations "In the Italian Style" and "Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue"; the Juilliard String Quartet plays "The Art of Fugue." . . . ¶ July 12: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in selections from Bach's "The Art of Fugue" and Third Orchestral Suite, as well as Mozart's E-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 482, with Yefim Bronfman) and Flute Concerto No. 2 (with Jean-Pierre Rampal). (Evenings at 8. 875-5030.)

Outdoor Choruses—Free concerts in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park. July 7 at 7: The New York Choral Society Chamber Singers. . . . ¶ July 12 at 7:30: The National Chorale sings Bernstein and Sondheim.

Goldman Band—Gene Young conducts free concerts of operatic selections. (Seaside Park, Brooklyn. July 9 at 8. . . . ¶ Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 10 at 7.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Harpsichordist Ilan Rechtman is featured in Bach's G-Minor and C-Minor Keyboard Concertos. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. July 10 at 11:30 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra—Kimbo Ishii-Eto conducts Schubert's Symphony No. 5 and Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Katsunori Ishii). (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. July 12 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

RECITALS

Sarah Davol and Christa Patton—Singing and playing (on a variety of instruments) music from George Washington's era. (Fraunces Tavern Museum, 54 Pearl St. July 7 at 12:30. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Bargemusic—Presenting a violin duo by Spohr, a Haydn piano trio, and Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet; with violinists Ik-Hwan Bae and Nai-Yuan Hu, cellist Wilhelmina Smith, and pianist Ursula Oppens. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. July 7 at 7:30 and July 10 at 4. 1-718 624-4061.)

Summergarden 1994—Pianists Jennifer Hayghe and Aleksandra Vojcic perform solo, four-hand, and two-piano works by Hindemith, Schoenberg, Scriabin, Prokofiev, Debussy, and Leo Ornstein. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 8-9 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Yuri Kim—Pianist, performing Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata and Brahms' Two Rhapsodies (Op. 79). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. July 10 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Angela Hewitt—Pianist, performing Handel's G-Major Chaconne and Variations, Bach's "Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue," Chopin's Four Impromptus, Ravel's "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," and several pieces by Granados. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. July 12 at 5:45.)

Laura Thomas—Soprano, singing music associated with the late-nineteenth-century "Yankee diva" Lillian Nordica, including works by Meyerbeer, Rossini, and Wagner; with pianist Anthony Bellov. (Abigail Adams Smith Museum, 421 E. 61st St. 838-6878. July 12 at 6:30.)

Washington Square Chamber Ensemble—Performing Puccini's "Crisantemi" (for string quartet), Brahms' Sextet No. 1, and string-quartet arrangements of works by Kern and Gershwin. (Washington Square Park. July 12 at 8. No tickets necessary. In case of rain, the concert will be held at Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—Opening concerts of the festival's fifty-eighth season, which will run through Sept. 4. July 7 at 6: The inauguration of Tanglewood's new recital hall includes performances by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and Chorus (with Seiji Ozawa, John Williams, Leon Fleisher, and Norio Ohga conducting), and solo turns by cellist Yo-Yo Ma (playing the première of John Williams' Cello Concerto) and pianist Peter Serkin (in Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy"). . . . ¶ July 8 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Act II of Saint-Saëns' "Samson et Dalila" (with soprano Jessye Norman, tenor Gary Lakes, and baritone Sherrill Milnes) and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3. . . . ¶ July 9 at 8:30: André Previn conducts the Boston Symphony in Prokofiev's Symphony No. 1 (the "Classical"), Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 (with Gil Shaham), Haydn's Symphony No. 82 (the "Bear"), and Ravel's "Mother Goose" Suite. . . . ¶ July 10 at 2:30: David Zinman conducts the Minnesota Orchestra in Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Haydn," Debussy's "La Mer," and (with baritone Thomas Hampson) Mahler's "Songs of a Wayfarer" and Ravel's "Don Quichotte à Dulcinée." . . . ¶ July 10 at 8:30: The Juilliard String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (his final, fragmentary quartet, Op. 103, in D Minor), Beethoven (in A-Minor, Op. 132), and Schubert (the "Death and the Maiden"). (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1600.)

Glimmerglass Opera—Opening performances of the company's twentieth season, which runs through Aug. 22. Gilbert and Sullivan's "Iolanthe," directed by Dorothy Danner and conducted by Hal France. (July 7 and July 9 at 8, and July 11 at 2.) . . . ¶ Monteverdi's "L'Incoronazione di Poppea," with soprano Dana Hanchard and countertenor Brian Asawa; directed by Jonathan Miller, and with Jane Glover conducting a period-instrument ensemble. (July 10 at 2.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255.)

Opera Festival of New Jersey—"La Bohème," conducted by Cal Stewart Kellogg. (July 7 at 8.) . . . ¶ The première of Peter Westergaard's "The Tempest," with Michael Pratt conducting. (July 8 at 8 and July 10 at 3.) . . . ¶ "The Barber of Seville," conducted by Louis Salemno. (July 9 at 8.) (Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N.J. 1-609 936-1500. All performances in English. Through July 16.)

Aston Magna Festival—The opening weekend of the festival's twenty-second season features chamber music and lieder by Schubert, Beethoven, and Paganini; with mezzo-soprano Judith Malafronte, violinist Daniel Stepner, classical guitarist Richard Savino, and fortepianist David Breitman. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. July 8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-6822. . . . ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 9 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3595.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 8 at 8:30: Pianist Lilian Kallir is featured in piano quartets by Mozart (in G Minor) and Schumann, in a concert that also includes pieces by Koren Cowgill and Scott Robbins. . . . ¶ July 9 at 8:30: Britten's "Phantasy" Quartet, Schumann's Adagio and Allegro for Horn and Piano, Beethoven's Septet, and jazz-inspired works by Copland (his "Ukelele Serenade"), Jacques Ysaÿe, and Robert Russell Bennett. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. 1-203 542-3000.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Works by Paul Schoenfield: John Nelson conducting the New World Symphony (Argo). The revival of klezmer (a sort of Jewish jazz) provides fodder for Schoenfield's "Klezmer Rondos" (with flutist Carol Wincenc) and "Vaudeville" (with trumpeter Wolfgang Basch), in which the soloists are featured against vivid orchestral backdrops. Complex but accessible, always interesting, and meticulously crafted, they share the disk with Schoenfield's "Four Parables" (with spectacular pianism from Jeffrey Kahane); its four loosely programmatic movements juxtapose disparate styles brilliantly but remain unified by the composer's unabashed, inquiring mind. Even staunch traditionalists are likely to find themselves seduced.

"Yankele": chansons yiddish (Opus 111). Theatre director and singer/guitarist Moshe Leiser, violinist Ami Flammer, and the scintillating accordionist Gérard Barreaux met by chance at a party, and a show was born. These eighteen songs, recorded live at the Lyons Opera only five months ago, include traditional Yiddish favorites as well as welcome discoveries. All are delivered from the heart, in arrangements that reveal cultivated musical intelligence (but never crossing over to the rarefied terrain of lieder), and with a dramatic trajectory that leads to a devastatingly poignant conclusion. Not your kind of thing? You're probably mistaken.

Caramoor Music Festival—July 8 at 8:30: An all-Bach concert that includes the Cantata No. 209 ("Non sa che sia dolore," featuring soprano Carol Wilson) and the D-Major Concerto for Three Violins (with Krista Bennion Feeney, Mayuki Fukuhara, and Mitsuru Tsubota). . . . ¶ July 9 at 8:30: Andrew Parrott conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Mozart's Symphony No. 28 and C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 467, with pianist Lydia Artymiw) and Schubert's Symphony No. 5. . . . ¶ July 10 at 5:30: The Emerson String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in B Minor, Op. 64, No. 2), Dvořák (in F Major, Op. 96, the "American"), and Beethoven (in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3). (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Maverick Concerts—The Composers String Quartet plays Wallingford Riegger's Quartet No. 2, as well as Beethoven's Quartets in D Major (Op. 18, No. 3) and B-Flat Major (Op. 130). (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. July 10 at 3.)

Music Mountain—The Brentano String Quartet plays Dvořák's "Cypresses," Beethoven's F-Major Quartet (Op. 135), and (with pianist Thomas Sauer) Brahms' C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Falls Village, Conn. July 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-203 824-7126.)

SPORTS

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000, and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499. World Cup Soccer is at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For tickets, call 1-800 769-1994.)

BASEBALL

Yankees—Vs. the Oakland Athletics, July 6 at 7:05. . . . ¶ Vs. the California Angels, July 7 at 1:05, July 8 at 7:05, July 9 at 2:05 (Old Timers' Day—ceremonies begin at noon), and July 10 at 1:35.

Mets—Away until July 14, when they'll face the San Diego Padres.

SOCCER

The World Cup—The most popular professional sporting event on earth, being held for the first time on our shores, is up and running at Giants Stadium. Attending a match is a bit like going abroad without leaving the tristate area. There's something exotic about being surrounded by thousands of happy polyglot spectators, listening to chants in ululating foreign tongues, and trying to decipher the banners and advertisements printed in non-Roman alphabets. We overheard one fan telling a companion, in uncertain English, that a referee brandishing a yellow (warning) card at one player was "giving him a green card."

In Los Angeles and Detroit, the United States team has fared surprisingly well, having achieved its best outing since 1930 by qualifying for the second round with a 1–1–1 record. The result of its confrontation with tournament-favorite Brazil, on July 4, was unknown as of press time.

On July 10 at noon, at Giants Stadium, a match will be played between two quarter-finalist teams.

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Splish, Splash—On July 10 at the Children's Museum of Manhattan: a puppet show based on Native American folktales about water (at 1 and 3) and, for those five and older, a related puppet-making workshop (at 2 and 4). Kids aged two to four can make fish puppets and learn swimming songs (also at 2 and 4). (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234.)

From Ballet to Hip-Hop—The Free Friday Family Fun Series at the Brooklyn Children's Museum focusses on dance, with performances by a group called Discover Dance. (145 Brooklyn Ave., at St. Mark's Ave. 1-718 735-4400. July 8 at 7.)

A Summer's Tale—Storytelling at the Hans Christian Andersen statue in Central Park continues with Andersen's "The Collar" and a Swedish folktale. (Fifth Ave. at 72nd St., west of the Conservatory Water. July 9, from 11 to noon. No tickets necessary.)

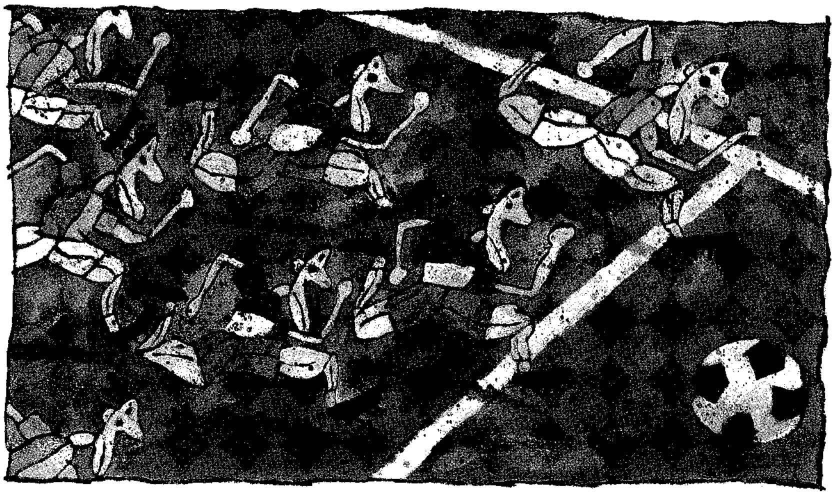
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Fun at Lincoln Center—The livin' is easy, and **midsummer night swing** is in full, well, swing. Dancing begins at 8:15, on Wednesdays through Saturdays, through July 23. Don't know a foxtrot from the limbo? There's a lesson at 6:30 every night except Saturday. . . . July 6: Evelyn (Champagne) King and Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. Billed as "classic" disco and soul. . . . July 7: The Twanglers and the John Herald Country Band. Wrangle with the two-step. . . . July 8: The New York–Buenos Aires Connection presents the tango. . . . July 9: Illinois Jacquet. Big band, with the emphasis on "big." . . . **the workmen's circle festival of yiddish music and theatre** will fill Damrosch Park with the sound of klezmer, on July 6 at 6. The Klezmer Conservatory Band of Boston and singer-actors Bruce Adler and Joanne Borts are among the performers. . . . **the 18th annual american crafts festival** will feature hundreds of artisans displaying pottery, stained glass, and other crafts, at Lincoln Center Plaza. Demonstrations of bootmaking and woodworking will also be featured. (July 9-10, from noon to 9. No tickets necessary.)

Fêting Freedom—The Feast of the Giglio honors St. Paulinus, who became a slave so that a widow's only son could go free. Upon hearing of the sacrifice, a Turkish sultan bartered for the saint's freedom. When Paulinus returned to Nola, Italy, he was greeted with *gigli* (lilies). The festival, which runs from July 6 to July 17, includes a parish feast, a dance through the streets, Turks' Night, and Gregorian chant. (Our Lady of Mount Carmel, N. 8th and Havemeyer Sts., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 1-718 384-0223.)

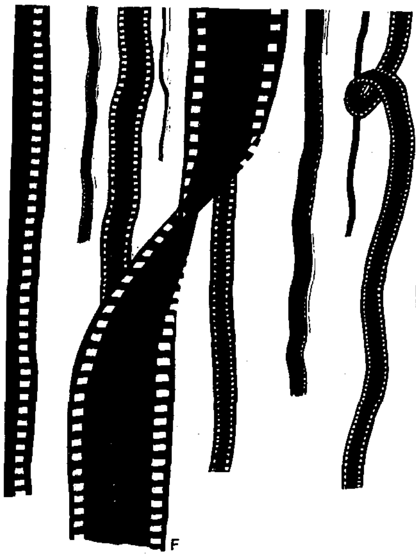
Earthly Delights—A discussion of Persian garden design, on July 10 at 1, will be followed by a belly-dance performance at 2:30. (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Daylilies will be at their peak at the New York Botanical Garden on July 9-10. Tours and talks will be offered. (Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8700.)

Walks—July 10 at 11: Big Onion Walking Tours will offer a tour and talk on Ellis Island. For more information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ July 10 at 2:30: Whatta mix. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum will take in the Irish East Side. For more information, call 431-0233.



World Cup Soccer at Giants Stadium.

BENOIT JACQUES



THE MOVIES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 24.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "White" (†).
Theatre 2: "Go Fish" (†).
Theatre 3: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (directed by Gus Van Sant), with Uma Thurman; and "Grief" (Richard Glatzer).
Theatre 4: "Kika" (†).
Theatre 5: "My Life's in Turnaround" (Eric Schaeffer and Donal Lardner Ward).
Theatre 6: "Little Buddha" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
A program of Italian films.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Getting Even with Dad" (†).
Theatre 2: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 3: "The Crow" (Alex Proyas).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Widows' Peak" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wyatt Earp" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 3: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 4: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis).
Theatre 5: "Forrest Gump."
Theatre 6: "Little Big League" (†).
Theatre 7: "Wolf" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through July 7: "Babyfever" (Henry Jaglom).
From July 8: "Chicken Hawk" (Adi Sideman).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 3: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki).
Theatre 4: "Woodstock" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 6: "Woodstock" (†).
Theatre 7: "Renaissance Man" (Penny Marshall), with Danny DeVito.

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wyatt Earp" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 3: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 4: "Little Big League" (†).
Theatre 5: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Lion King" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 4: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis), with Tom Hanks.
Theatre 2: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 3: "Wolf" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Slingshot" (†).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lion King" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Renaissance Man" (Penny Marshall).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Flintstones" (†).
Theatre 2: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Getting Even with Dad" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 2: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: "Little Buddha" (†).
Theatre 3: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "Little Big League" (†).
Theatre 3: "City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Shadow."
Theatre 5: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 6: "Blown Away."

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Maverick" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson.
Theatre 2: "Woodstock" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Wolf" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Beverly Hills Cop III" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Wyatt Earp" (Lawrence Kasdan).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Flintstones" (†).
Theatre 2: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis), with Tom Hanks.
Theatre 3: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 4: "Wyatt Earp" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 5: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 6: "Little Big League" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Renaissance Man" (Penny Marshall), with Danny DeVito.
Theatre 2: "The Lion King" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "High School" (1969, directed by Fred Wiseman) and "High School II" (Wiseman), both documentaries.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The Boys of St. Vincent" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "Speed" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Bhaji on the Beach" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 7: "Thieves Quartet" (Joe Chappelle); and "Bitter Moon" (†). From July 8: "Coming Out Under Fire" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Slingshot" (†).
Theatre 4: "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" (François Girard).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: "The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.
Theatre 3: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis).
Theatre 4: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 5: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 6: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).
Theatre 7: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 8: "The Shadow."
Theatre 9: "Blown Away."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold" (†).
Theatre 2: "Renaissance Man" (Penny Marshall), with Danny DeVito; and "Getting Even with Dad" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sankofa" (Haile Gerima).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian).
Theatre 2: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 4: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" (Gus Van Sant), with Uma Thurman.
Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 6: "The Paper" (Ron Howard).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Wolf" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Kika" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki), with Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Go Fish" (†).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Bhaji on the Beach" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Widows' Peak" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"I Love Trouble" (Charles Shyer), with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Little Buddha" (†).
Theatre 2: "White" (†).
Theatre 3: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 4: "A Place in the World" (Adolfo Aristarain; in Spanish).
Theatre 5: "Red Rock West" (†).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Speed" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 3: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis), with Tom Hanks.
Theatre 4: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 6: "Wyatt Earp" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Costner.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Bitter Moon" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).
Theatre 2: "Little Big League" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Flintstones" (†).
Theatre 2: "Getting Even with Dad" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Getting Even with Dad" (†) and "Speed" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wyatt Earp" (directed by Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 3: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 4: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins), with Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 5: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).
Theatre 6: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 7: "Blown Away."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Lion King" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Crow" (Alex Proyas).
Theatre 3: "Renaissance Man" (Penny Marshall), with Danny DeVito.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Little Big League" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy), with Alec Baldwin.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
"The Conformist" (1970, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 6: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968, Stanley Kubrick), with Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood; and "Blade Runner" (1982, Ridley Scott), with Harrison Ford.
July 7: "Double Indemnity" (1944, Billy Wilder), with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, and Edward G. Robinson; and "The Lady Eve" (1941, Preston Sturges), with Stanwyck and Henry Fonda.
July 8-9: "A Clockwork Orange" (1971, Stanley Kubrick), with Malcolm McDowell; and "Blue Velvet" (1986, David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan.
July 10: "Foreign Correspondent" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joel McCrea and Laraine Day; and "Saboteur" (1942, Hitchcock), with Priscilla Lane and Robert Cummings.
July 11: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina and Sandra Milo; and "Il Bidone" ("The Swindlers"; 1955, Fellini; in Italian), with Broderick Crawford, Masina, Richard Basehart, and Franco Fabrizi.
July 12: "The Big Sleep" (1946, Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Martha Vickers; and "To Have and Have Not" (1944, Hawks), with Bogart, Bacall, and Walter Brennan.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through July 12: A program of gay and lesbian films. . . . ¶ A series of films from M-G-M studios. July 7 at 2:30: "Camille" (1937, directed by George Cukor), with Greta Garbo, Robert Taylor, and Henry Daniell. . . . July 7 at 6: "A Night at the Opera" (1935, Sam Wood), with the Marx Brothers. . . . July 8 at 2:30 and July 12 at 6: "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1958, Richard Brooks), with Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, and Burl Ives. . . . July 8 at 6: "Double Wedding" (1937, Richard Thorpe), with Myrna Loy and William Powell. . . . July 8 at 8: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (†). . . . July 9 at noon: "Lassie Come Home" (1943, Fred M. Wilcox), with Roddy McDowell. . . . July 9 at 2:30 and July 11 at 1: "Gone with the Wind" (†). . . . July 10 at noon: "Hearts of the West" (†). . . . July 10 at 2:30: "Cause for Alarm" (1951, Tay Garnett), with Loretta Young and Barry Sullivan. . . . July 10 at 5: "Get Carter" (1971, Mike Hodges), with Michael Caine. . . . July 11 at 6 and July 12 at 2:30: "Diane" (1956, David Miller), with Lana Turner, Pedro Armendariz, and Roger Moore.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Through July 7: A program of films from Ireland. . . . ¶ From July 8: A program of French films.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Howard Hawks. July 9 at 2: "Fig Leaves" (1926). . . . ¶ July 9 at 3:30: "The Cradle Snatchers" (1927). . . . ¶ July 9 at 5: "Fazil" (1928). . . . ¶ July 10 at 2: "To Have and Have Not" (1944), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Walter Brennan. . . . ¶ July 10 at 4: "Rio Bravo" (†).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—July 7 at 7 and July 10 at 6: "Three Lives" (1970, Kate Millett). . . . ¶ July 7-9 at 9 and July 10 at 8: "The Genius" (1993, Joe Gibbons). . . . ¶ July 8-9 at 6: "On the Bowery" (1957, Lionel Rogosin), a semi-documentary; and "Come Back, Africa" (†).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 8 at 7: "The Turning Point" (1977, Herbert Ross), with Anne Bancroft and Shirley MacLaine. . . . ¶ July 9, three versions of "A Star Is Born." At 1: Frank Pierson's 1976 film, with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson. . . . At 4: George Cukor's 1954 film, with Judy Garland and James Mason. . . . At 7: William Wellman's 1937 film, with Janet Gaynor and Fredric March.

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 41st St.—Mondays, starting at dusk, free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes cartoons and coming attractions. The feature film on July 11 will be Elia Kazan's "Splendor in the Grass" (1961), with Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty. (Rain date will be the following night.)

Film al Fresco, at Le Madri Restaurant, 168 W. 18th St. (727-8022)—Sunday evenings, more films out of doors, with food and live music beginning at 6 and the main feature starting at about 9. On July 10, the feature will be Dario Argento's "Suspiria" (1977) with Jessica Harper.

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—July 7 at 7: "Cup Final" (1992, Eran Riklis; in English, Arabic, and Hebrew). . . . ¶ July 7-10 at 9: "Ultra" (1991, Ricky Tagnazzi; in Italian). . . . ¶ July 8 at 6:30: "Maurice" (1987, James Ivory), with James Wilby, Hugh Grant, and Rupert Graves. . . . ¶ July 9 at 7:15: "La Strada" (1954, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart, and Giulietta Masina. . . . ¶ July 10 at 6:15: "Voices of Sarafina!" (1989, Nigel Noble), a documentary.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—The annual summer screening of silent films. July 6 at 8: "The Gold Rush" (1925, Charlie Chaplin), with Chaplin, Mack Swain, and Georgia Hale. . . . ¶ July 7 at 8: "The General" (1926, Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman), with Keaton and Marion Mack. . . . ¶ July 8 at 8: A program of six short films—"The Tramp" (1915), with Chaplin; "His Royal Slyness" (1921), with Harold Lloyd; "Saturday Afternoon" (1926), with Harry Langdon; "Big Business" (1929), with Laurel and Hardy; and "One Week" (1920), with Keaton. (Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.)

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Chicken Hawk—A documentary about N.A.M.B.L.A., the North American Man Boy Love Association. Directed by Adi Sideman. Opening July 8.

Coming Out Under Fire—Arthur Dong's documentary about the experience of gays and lesbians in the United States military during the Second World War. (See brief review on this page.) Opening July 8.

Forrest Gump—A mildy retarded innocent (Tom Hanks) leads a charmed life, becoming an All-America football player, a Vietnam War hero, and a successful businessman. With Robin Wright, Gary Sinise, Mykelti Williamson, and Sally Field. Eric Roth's screenplay is based on the novel by Winston Groom. Directed by Robert Zemeckis. Opening July 6.

High School II—Fredrick Wiseman returns to the subject of his 1969 documentary. The earlier film examined a Philadelphia school; this time, the setting is Spanish Harlem's Central Park East Secondary School. Opening July 6.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Bhaji on the Beach—This tangy British feminist comedy-drama portrays a group of Indian women from Birmingham day-tripping to the working-class beach resort of Blackpool. It's humorous and prickly when charting generational and cultural rifts, erratic and heavy-handed at depicting the younger women's angry men. The director, Gurinder Chadha, has a palpable affection for her performers that overcomes her stop-and-go pacing: you grow fond of the most hidebound traditionalist, Pushpa (Zohra Segal), and still understand why the forward-looking Hashida (Sarita Khajuria) would toss a drink at her. Meera Syal wrote the script, from a story she and Chadha cooked up together.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Angelika 57.)

Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte in "I Love Trouble."

Bitter Moon—Roman Polanski's rivetingly weird new movie tells the story of two married couples who meet on a cruise ship. Nigel (Hugh Grant) and Fiona (Kristin Scott Thomas), a proper pair of Brits, are obviously a little bored with each other; voluptuous Mimi (Emmanuelle Seigner) and her wheelchair-bound husband, Oscar (Peter Coyote), are locked in a destructive relationship in which their mutual passion can be expressed only as cruelty. Polanski can't quite muster the icy absurdist rigor that made his early pictures so distinctive, and the big erotic set pieces play like an "SCTV" parody of "Last Tango in Paris." The couples' sadistic gamesmanship isn't nearly as disturbing—or as funny—as it should be. Also with Victor Banerjee.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/11/94.) (Quad Cinema, and Thalia.)

The Boys of St. Vincent—From the outside, St. Vincent—an orphanage, run by a Roman Catholic religious order, in St. John's, Newfoundland—is Boys Town; on the inside, it's a Dickensian hell, in which trapped boys burn for their elders' sins. The head Brother, Peter Lavin (Henry Czerny), is a monster, constantly forcing his sexual attentions on ten-year-old Kevin Reevey (Johnny Morina), and he's not the only abuser on the staff. John N. Smith's movie—a two-part film, made for Canadian television—is muckraking social drama that transforms itself, in the course of its three hours, into something far more disturbing than a straightforward exposé. Part I, set in 1975, is nearly as haunting an evocation of children's helplessness as "The Night of the Hunter." Part II, set fifteen years later, is about the helplessness of adults, and is even finer. Czerny's performance is extraordinary. And Smith, not satisfied with simply provoking moral indignation, zooms in closer and closer on the damaged souls of the abused and the abusers; he ends up with a startlingly detailed picture of spiritual chaos.—T.R. (6/6/94) (Film Forum.)

City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold—For roughly two-thirds of the way, it's hysterical in every sense—a galloping leap up from the original. Billy Crystal, the star and moving force, manages to parody as well as act out the fantasies and sensitivities of fortyish urban males. With best pal Daniel Stern and cadging kid brother Jon Lovitz, Crystal heads West again, this time to hunt for gold. What sustains the comedy is the three-way chemistry of the ingratiating Everyguy Crystal, the pathetically vulnerable, almost fetal Stern, and the dissembling know-it-all Lovitz, who does a virtuoso job of teetering between being an idiot savant and an idiot. Jack Palance is irrepressible. Paul Weiland directed, for the most part briskly, the script by Crystal, Lowell Ganz, and Babaloo Mandel.—M.S. (First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy.)

Coming Out Under Fire—Once you get beyond the tendentious rhetoric that opens the film, Arthur Dong's documentary about homosexuals serving in the Second World War has double impact. Implicitly, it argues against any limits on gays and lesbians in the military, while illustrating how even the recent "Don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" compromise is an improvement over the unrestrained harassment of the past. Interviews with veterans of diverse backgrounds and attitudes—including Marvin Liebman, author of "Coming Out Conservative"—provide a fresh anecdotal history that builds to a devastating account of mid-war anti-gay witch hunts. Co-written by Dong and Allan Bérubé, who wrote the source book, "Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II."—M.S. (Quad Cinema; starting July 8.)

The Flintstones—The latest and least advisable attempt to turn a cartoon into a live-action feature. The cast looks sound enough—John Goodman as Fred Flintstone, Elizabeth Perkins as Wilma, Rick Moranis and Rosie O'Donnell as the Rubbles—but the script, cobbled together by a crowd of writers, gives them nothing but a handful of limp gags. The saving grace is Elizabeth Taylor as Fred's mother-in-law, the terrifying Pearl Slaghoople. Directed by Brian Levant, who made "Beethoven." This is an even bigger dog.—A.L. (Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Olympia.)

Getting Even with Dad—If you really want revenge against a negligent father, just buy him a ticket to this movie. Macaulay Culkin stars as a precocious eleven-year-old in this towhead-knows-best fable; in the course of a week, he domesticates and reforms his ex-con dad (Ted Danson). The director, Howard Deutch, puts talented comic performers through diluted "Home Alone" slapstick contortions—notably Saul Rubinek and Gailard Sartain, who do a forced variation on the Daniel Stern–Joe Pesci roles. The screenplay, by two of this season's biggest art criminals (Tom S. Parker and Jim Jennewein, the lead writers for "The Flintstones"), alternates schmalz that makes you gag with gags that make you gag.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 59th Street East Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Go Fish—This low-budget black-and-white gabfest with pseudo-poetic montages and a Greek chorus of gay mentors has been hailed as the first lesbian crossover movie. Go figure. The kind of young, kind of now Max, a real cutie (played by co-writer and co-producer Guinevere Turner), takes the whole ninety-minute running time to get it on with the plain, hippie-ish Ely (V. S. Brodie). It's supposed to be a triumph of Max's maturing sensibilities that she sees past Ely's looks and dated style, but Ely lacks even the proverbial great personality, and in movie terms they're a bad match. The film plays like the story of an arranged marriage—friends spend more time making Max and Ely an item than the lovers do. Rose Troche, the director (and co-producer and co-writer), celebrates the joys and touches on the tensions of pairing, nesting, and community. She and Turner provide affable conversation, but it's not dramatic dialogue. Their work may be empowering, etc.; as a movie, it's depleting.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Kika—A new farrago from Pedro Almodóvar—as outrageous as his previous efforts, but without the suavity. Verónica Forqué plays Kika, a makeup artist whose life is complicated by a lesbian maid, a brooding lover, the lesbian maid's delinquent brother (who used to be a porn star), and the brooding lover's American stepfather (who may or may not be a murderer). Almodóvar shuffles them around in various combinations, but his career as a shock merchant is running out of steam. Sensitive souls may not want to hang around to see out the prolonged rape scene. With Victoria Abril and Peter Coyote. In Spanish.—A.L. (5/16/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Festival.)

The Lion King—Disney's new animated feature is a coming-of-age story about animal royalty. It's "Bambi," but with carnivores. The hero, a young lion named Simba, is born to the purple, but before he can ascend to the throne he has to make cute friends, court a soft-eyed female of the species, and see his father die (in a scene that may actually jerk kids' tears more shamelessly than its counterpart in "Bambi"). Between traumas, the movie serves up soothingly banal musical

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

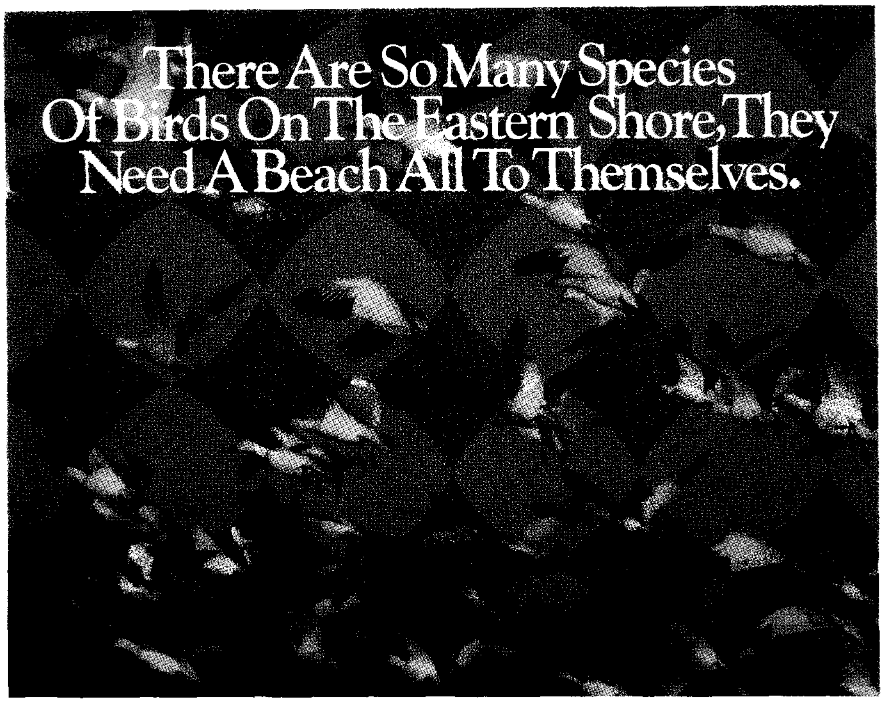
numbers (composed by Elton John and Tim Rice) and silly, rambunctious comedy. It's such an extreme example of the you'll-laugh-you'll-cry aesthetic that we begin to suspect that the directors, Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, are just flaunting their power, showing us that they can manipulate our responses at will. The animation, computer-assisted in some of the more elaborate sequences, is sometimes impressive, but rarely impressive enough to overcome a certain impersonality—a stubborn mechanical coldness. Among the celebrity voices on the soundtrack, two performances stand out: Jeremy Irons, as the villainous lion Scar, does an elegant, funny George Sanders impersonation, and Nathan Lane, reading the part of a peppy, skeptical meerkat, gives the picture a welcome shot at Warners-style brashness.—T.R. (6/20/94) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

LITTLE BIG LEAGUE—If expansion and reorganization don't kill baseball, maybe butterfingered baseball movies will. In this syrupy kids' stuff, Luke Edwards plays a twelve-year-old who inherits the Minnesota Twins from his grandfather (Jason Robards) and appoints himself manager. He reminds the players that the game is supposed to be fun; when *he* forgets, his star and future stepfather (Timothy Busfield) reminds him. The director, Andrew Scheinman, scuttles the momentum that any baseball film should generate just by following a season. He paces the comedy and drama so poorly that it comes as a relief when the action stops well before the World Series. With Ashley Crow as Mom. Screenplay by Gregory K. Pincus and Adam Scheinman.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

LITTLE BUDDHA—How the director of "The Conformist," which looks better and sharper every year, ended up making "Little Buddha," which already looks out of date, is anybody's guess. In the late sixties, Bernardo Bertolucci might have got away with this kind of thing—this gentle, wondering, trippy slice of nonsense. Now it just makes you squirm. Bridget Fonda and Chris Isaak play the parents of a young boy who may be the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama. The film therefore splits between their home town of Seattle (gray and blue, glass and steel) and the mountain stronghold of the Buddhist monks (red and orange, silk and wood). This design pattern is the backbone of the picture; there really is nothing else to it. The only fun comes in the historical flashbacks to the story of Buddha, played by Keanu Reeves, stripped to the waist: the spiritual leader as supermodel.—A.L. (5/30/94) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

RED ROCK WEST—This clever thriller about a good-hearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot ranks tops among low-budget neo-noirs. Taut and deadpan witty, it makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Dennis Hopper and J. T. Walsh do their freshest, snappiest work in years, and Lara Flynn Boyle is a tense, ambiguous love object. Cage's shaggy hangdog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. Dwight Yoakam contributes a piquant cameo as a tough, helpful truck driver.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE SLINGSHOT—A quaint, folkloric parable of resilience, set in Stockholm in the twenties. The ten-year-old hero, Roland (Jesper Salén), manufactures slingshots out of scrap metal and banned condoms. Actually, his inventions are more like boomerangs—every in-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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

genious plan he concocts comes back to hit him in the head. Ake Sandgren's movie (based on an autobiographical novel by Roland Schütt) has unusually spicy ingredients for a Scandinavian coming-of-age story. Roland has a Russian Jewish mother (Basia Frydman), a Socialist father (Stellan Skarsgard), and a would-be boxer brother (Niclas Olund) who keeps bashing him in the nose. But the movie lacks richness and impact. The final note of affirmation seems forced, because the writer-director hasn't dug deep enough into Roland's character to suggest the man he'll become. In Swedish.—M.S. (Eastside Playhouse, and Quad Cinema.)

Speed—Trouble on the Los Angeles freeway. Evil mastermind Dennis Hopper (who else?) is a disgruntled psycho who wires a bomb to the bottom of a city bus. Enter Keanu Reeves as a young cop who is one step behind Hopper, but catching up fast. The director is Jan De Bont, who used to be a cameraman; this is his first feature, and he sees the plot through in a surge of bright images. The result is clean, delirious, and, yes, speedy—the best big-vehicle-in-peril movie since Clouzot's "The Wages of Fear." You leave the theatre exhausted, and blissed out. With Sandra Bullock, who gives a gutsy performance as a passenger who finds herself behind the wheel of the bus.—A.L. (6/13/94) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and Criterion Center.)

White—The second in Krzysztof Kieślowski's "Three Colors" trilogy—"Blue" was released here in 1993, and "Red" was recently screened at the Cannes festival—is the story of a Chaplinesque Polish Everyman named Karol Karol (Zbigniew Zamachowski). The picture traces his progress from utter ignominy, in Paris, to a strange kind of personal power, which he acquires in the unsettled new society of his homeland. Kieślowski has abandoned the elegantly abstract style and enigmatic tones of his recent work and has adopted instead a folksy-picaresque manner, which doesn't suit him. Mysteriously, this great filmmaker lacks the mundane skills to keep us interested in a story that has no real spiritual dimension: the characters are monotonous, the storytelling isn't clear, and the images look flat, merely functional. In this picture Kieślowski isn't searching for immanence: everything has only its face value, and you feel as if a light had gone out in the world. Also with Julie Delpy. In Polish and French.—T.R. (6/20/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Widows' Peak—In the scintillating opening of this corkscrew comedy (set in the twenties), the director, John Irvin, and the writer, Hugh Leonard, introduce a picturesque Irish spot where the choice hillside property belongs to a pack of wealthy widows led by Joan Plowright. Deftly and hilariously, the filmmakers sketch a snobbish, genteel matriarchy and the influence it has over men like the local dentist (Jim Broadbent) and Plowright's son (Adrian Dunbar). The movie doesn't stay at that high level; the script becomes a single-twist mystery about the enmity between the misfit of Widows' Peak—a poor spinster played by Mia Farrow—and its seductive newcomer, Natasha Richardson. But Irvin's direction has never been more confident and spirited, the casting is witty, and the ensemble work wonderful. The standout is Farrow, who brings force and passion to a tricky role.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, and Paris.)

Wolf—With Jack Nicholson and Michelle Pfeiffer, directed by Mike Nichols. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Come Back, Africa (1960)—A semi-documentary on what it's like to be black in South Africa. Lionel Rogosin's film centers on a man who has left his farm and is trying to make a living in Johannesburg. Clumsy, but with some rarely seen material.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; July 8-9.)

Tommy Lee Jones in "Blown Away."

Gone with the Wind (1939)—The mother of all blockbusters and an irresistible extravaganza—if not exactly a great movie. After the phenomenal first half, it becomes a patchwork Reconstruction tearjerker, pivoting on one pathos-laden death scene after another. Of course, its faults don't matter, because of Vivien Leigh's magnetic Scarlett O'Hara: a woman of action and appetite who's also an epic procrastinator. She's spirited when it comes to scrounging food or launching a business, adrift when it comes to recognizing her deepest feelings, such as her attraction and resistance to that devoted buccaneer Rhett Butler. Leigh's plucky O'Hara and Clark Gable's Butler, with his wide grin and seductive scowl, spike the movie's mint-julep Dixie. The producer, David O. Selznick, hired the wonder-working production designer William Cameron Menzies, Broadway playwright Sidney Howard (and a bunch of uncredited writers, notably Ben Hecht), and a cast that includes Olivia de Havilland, Leslie Howard, Thomas Mitchell, Hattie McDaniel, and Butterfly McQueen. Based on the novel by Margaret Mitchell. Victor Fleming directed, with contributions from George Cukor, Sam Wood, and others.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; July 9 and 11.)

Hearts of the West (1975)—Jeff Bridges is just the right actor to play Lewis Tater, an Iowa farm boy who writes Western stories and aspires to be like his idol, Zane Grey. Lewis leaves home in 1929, heads toward the land of his purple-prose dreams, and stumbles into a job as a stuntman in Western pictures directed by a penny-pinching hysteric played by Alan Arkin. This nostalgia comedy has an eccentric enchantment to it. The troupe of cowboy actors, headed by Andy Griffith, is the most engaging ensemble since the Dead End Kids, and the heroine, a script girl, is played by wide-eyed Blythe Danner, who is reminiscent of both Margaret Sullavan and Jean Arthur. The people and the atmosphere are so good that one wants more of them; the rinky-dink chase plot isn't needed at all, and there are also unnecessary complications involving Herbert Edelman, as a movie producer, and Donald Pleasence, as a Western-pulp publisher. But it's a film that plays on in the mind. Howard Zieff directed, from Rob Thompson's script.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; July 10.)

Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)—As pretty and inviting as a candy sampler, with some bittersweet nuggets inside. The director, Vincente Minnelli, puts his sophisticated style and vibrant performers at the service of a simple Midwestern fable with the message "There's no place like home." The blooming Judy Garland ("I have too much bloom," she quips) and the feisty young Margaret O'Brien are the liveliest of Leon Ames's four daughters; under their influence, Ames, a lawyer, decides to stay in the cozy Gateway City of 1903 rather than accept a promotion to his firm's New York office. With the help of an able cast (Mary Astor as the mother, Harry Davenport as Grandpa, and Lucille Bremer and Joan Carroll as the other sisters), Minnelli brings out the romance of domesticity. Garland exudes a plangent longing and O'Brien a pipsqueak nerviness that cut through treacle. No one else has captured the joyful horror of a child's Halloween—or, for that matter, any pre-teen rite of passage—as expertly as Minnelli does in O'Brien's trick-or-treat sequence. The four Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane tunes include "The Trolley Song" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Irving Brecher and Fred F. Finkelhoffe wrote the script, based on Sally Benson's stories for this magazine.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; July 8.)

Rio Bravo (1959)—Howard Hawks directed this semi-satiric Western pastiche (mainly of old Hawks movies), with John Wayne as John T. Chance, Dean Martin as a drunk called Dude, Ricky Nelson as Colorado, Walter Brennan as Stumpy, and Angie Dickinson as Feathers. Silly, but with zest; there are some fine action sequences, and the performers seem to be enjoying their roles.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 10.)

Woodstock (1970)—Michael Wadleigh's documentary of the epochal 1969 rock extravaganza captures groovy musical highs and rain-soaked chaos. While counterculture anthems waft through the soundtrack, the film builds on pictures of hippies on horseback and workers preparing Max Yasgur's farm for a crowd that grew to roughly half a million. By the time Richie Havens starts the program, the movie audience is primed to be uplifted. Wadleigh and his fellow-cinematographers frame telling images of legendary performances, including The Who in a paroxysm from "Tommy" and Joe Cocker playing neurotic air guitar as he wails "With a Little Help from My Friends." The split-screen imagery augments this you-are-there trip. Martin Scorsese and Thelma Schoonmaker assisted Wadleigh and also edited (along with Jere Huggins and others). The four-hour director's cut, expanded by about forty minutes, includes new footage of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Creedence Clearwater Revival.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, and Gemini.)

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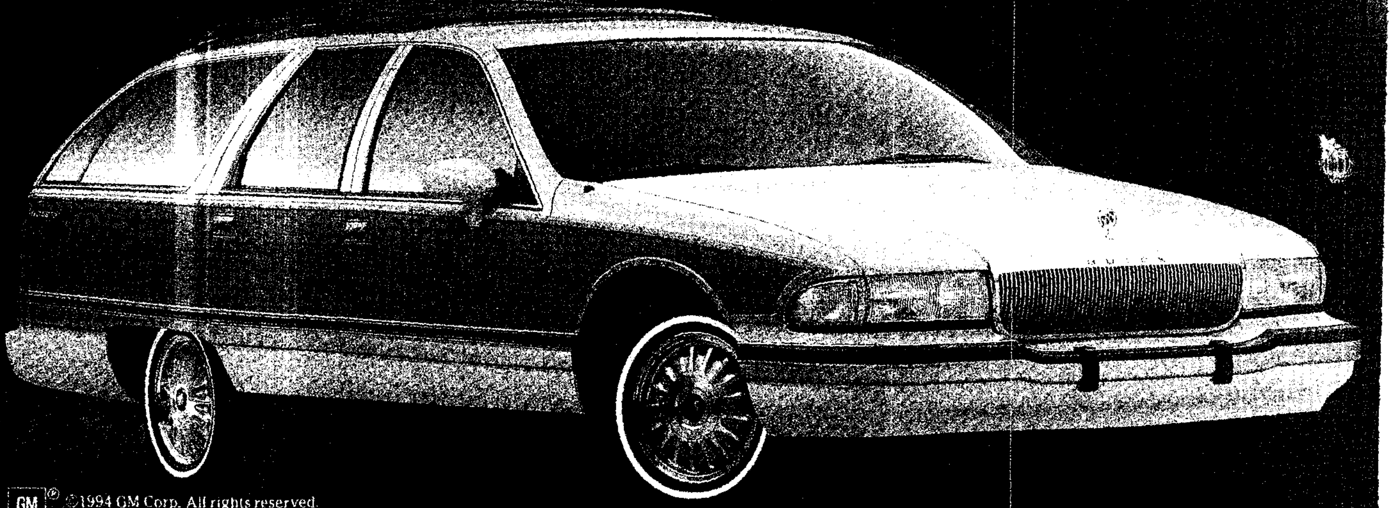

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

IN HIS *TIMES*

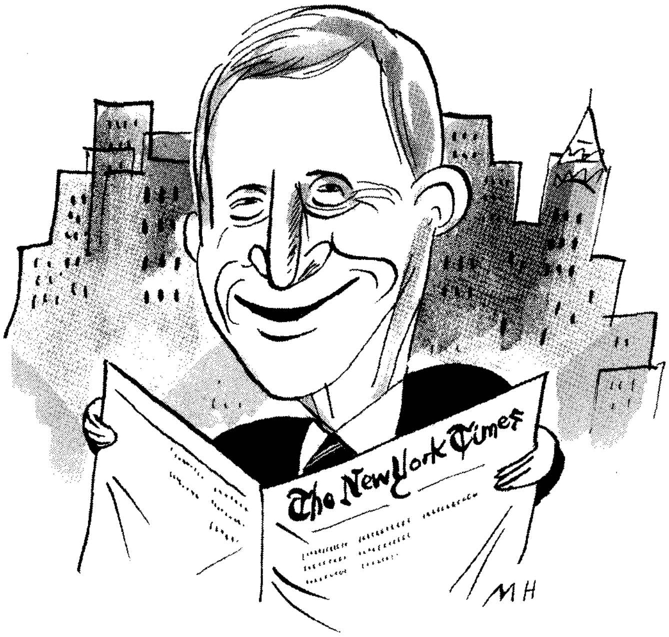
If Joseph Lelyveld could write the headline on the story of his job promotion, it would look something like this: "CAREER *TIMES* MAN TAKES OVER AS TOP EDITOR; MOVE OCCASIONS LITTLE COMMENT, NO GOSSIP." The story that followed would be the old-fashioned kind, such as the *Times* seldom runs anymore, in which a shirtsleeved executive promises stability and politely declines to discuss future plans. The announcement this past April that Mr. Lelyveld would succeed Max Frankel as executive editor on July 1st was greeted inside the *Times* as a pure triumph of merit. Mr. Lelyveld is one of the most deeply respected figures at the paper. He was a first-rate reporter in New Delhi and Hong Kong; and after two postings in South Africa he wrote a haunting and melancholy book about that country, "Move Your Shadow," which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1986.

Mr. Lelyveld is also considered a somewhat diffident man, shy and guarded. When we dropped by the *Times* newsroom last Wednesday evening, a day and a half before he was to take over, he showed us into the very modest office that he occupied as managing editor. He'd already cleaned it out, and it was bare save for a desk, a couple of chairs, and a painting on velvet of John Wayne—a gift to the *Times*' new managing editor, Eugene Roberts, from Roberts's former colleagues at the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. A party for Mr. Frankel was winding down out in the newsroom, and Mr. Lelyveld, a medium-sized man of fifty-seven, with a long, sensitive nose and gingery-gray hair, sat down, jacketless and tieless, holding a plastic cup of champagne. We began by asking Mr. Lelyveld about recent changes in the culture of the paper. He pondered, started to say something, and then backed off—a favorite conversational gambit, it turned out. The changes, he finally said, had been exaggerated, and he added, "There's so much more continuity in this place than there is real change."

Mr. Lelyveld would know. A classic *Times* man, he has worked for no other paper. The cup of champagne sat neglected in his hand as he recalled his early days as a reporter, when he would rush from the *Times* building to the Astor Hotel with an assignment to write five hundred words on "what Senator So-and-So told the Hadassah ladies." In those days, Mr. Lelyveld observed, whatever powerful people said and did was considered news. Nowadays, the *Times* has a greater say about what matters and what doesn't, and it permits reporters to have a say, too. Mr. Lelyveld, in his seven years as a top editor at the paper, has, in fact, been identified with such changes.

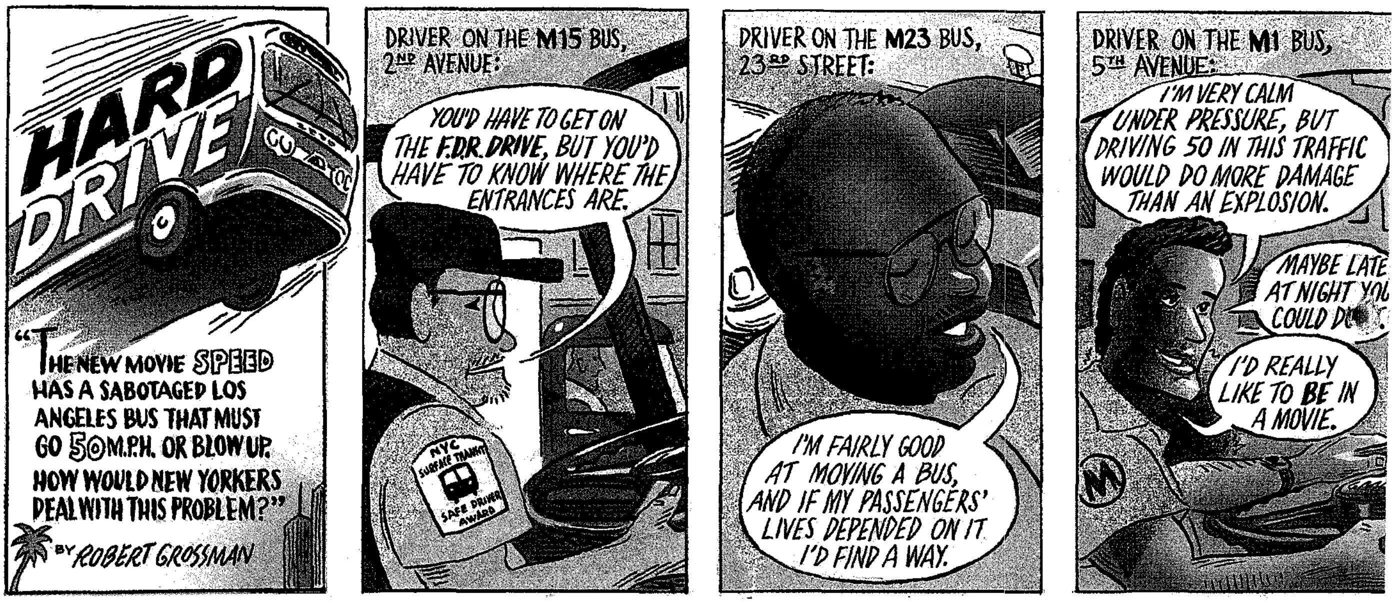
He said that a key aspect of his new job would be his role as "the keeper of standards around here." One element of the paper that is not meeting the highest standards, he said, is business and financial reporting, which he believes has become increasingly important in the post-Cold War world. The Business Day section is slated for a thorough overhaul, and there will be personnel changes. And foreign news, Mr. Lelyveld told us, "has to move toward being much more economically literate."

The hardest—or, at least, the most unpleasant—part of Mr. Lelyveld's new assignment may turn out to be sitting on the other side of the notebook. As what was evidently the ordeal of a brief conversation ended, he fixed us with a rueful look and said, "I'm not used to this." He stood up, opened his office door, paused for a few moments, and then said, "I hope I'll prove sufficiently dull." He



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARCELLUS HALL

THE TALK OF THE TOWN'S ARTIST AT LARGE


HARD DRIVE
"THE NEW MOVIE SPEED HAS A SABOTAGED LOS ANGELES BUS THAT MUST GO 50 M.P.H. OR BLOW UP. HOW WOULD NEW YORKERS DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM?"
BY ROBERT GROSSMAN
DRIVER ON THE M15 BUS, 2ND AVENUE:
YOU'D HAVE TO GET ON THE F.D.R. DRIVE, BUT YOU'D HAVE TO KNOW WHERE THE ENTRANCES ARE.
NYC SURFACE TRANSIT SAFE DRIVER AWARD
DRIVER ON THE M23 BUS, 23RD STREET:
I'M FAIRLY GOOD AT MOVING A BUS, AND IF MY PASSENGERS' LIVES DEPENDED ON IT I'D FIND A WAY.
DRIVER ON THE M1 BUS, 5TH AVENUE:
I'M VERY CALM UNDER PRESSURE, BUT DRIVING 50 IN THIS TRAFFIC WOULD DO MORE DAMAGE THAN AN EXPLOSION.
MAYBE LATE AT NIGHT YOU COULD DO
I'D REALLY LIKE TO BE IN A MOVIE.
M

started to add something but thought better of it. The cup of champagne was still in his hand, untouched.

ON AIR

LeAlan: My name is LeAlan Jones. I'm fifteen, and I'm in the ninth grade at King High School in Chicago.

Lloyd: I'm Lloyd Newman. I'm—Hey, LeAlan! Look at this! The Wu-Tang Clan CD! I'm putting this on loud.

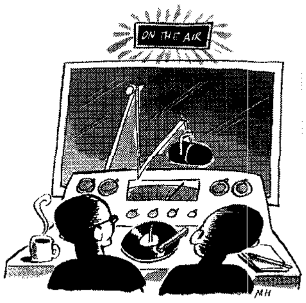
LeAlan: We're here in Dave's apartment in the East Village. Dave is Mr. David Isay, he's a radio producer, and he found me and Lloyd and taught us how to make a radio show. Lloyd lives in the Ida B. Wells housing development with his sisters, and I live right nearby. The show we did was called 'Ghetto Life 101.' We interviewed people we know and talked about what our life is like, and they played the show on NPR. We got a lot of awards for the show. Now we're in New York to get another award, from the Livingston Awards for Young Journalists.

Lloyd: We got to miss school to come here.

LeAlan: I missed, let me think, one, two, uh, five days.

Lloyd: We flew here, and you fly in over the water, and I was looking out and saying, 'Uh-oh, I hope we don't *land* in the water.' Then we went to the hotel—me, LeAlan, my sister Precious, and LeAlan's mother, Tootchie—and they wouldn't let us in, I guess because we're so young that they didn't believe us. They called security on us, because they thought we were some pranksters, or something.

LeAlan: Then we went to the award lunch, and we gave a speech. My speech said thank you to my mother and my grandmother, and I said I don't want to be no statistic about young black males. I said I don't like this title of the lost generation, because I'm not a lost person. Then we got out of our dress clothes, and Dave took us to Coney Island.


ON THE AIR
MH

Lloyd: Coney Island is O.K. You should go. Just don't get on the Cyclone. It's too shaky.

LeAlan: Hey, Dave! *Dave!* Where did we go after that? I think it was some kind of . . . deli. It was where Dave had that corned-beef sandwich. Dave! Is that where you had that sandwich?

Dave: If you guys would turn the stereo down a little, I could hear you.

Lloyd: It's the Wu-Tang Clan, Dave! Come on!

•

LeAlan: Now we're here at—Dave! Where are we?

Dave: This restaurant is called Veselka. Guys, come on, let's order.

Lloyd: I want two eggs and French toast, and pancakes and juice. Dave, what's a blintz? O.K., I want a blintz as an appetizer.

LeAlan: I want pancakes and eggs, and—Dave, what's challah? I want some of that. And I want some of that . . . What's that, Dave? *Borscht*? Well, I want some of that, and I want a piece of cheesecake as an appetizer. But only if they have cherries for the top.

Lloyd: Yuuuck, is this the blintz? I thought it was made of cheese. This thing made out of cow eyeballs. LeAlan, look at this! Look! It's *nasty*. I don't think I want it.

LeAlan: It's just cheese covered up. Put some salt on it.

Lloyd: I did. It's still *nasty*.

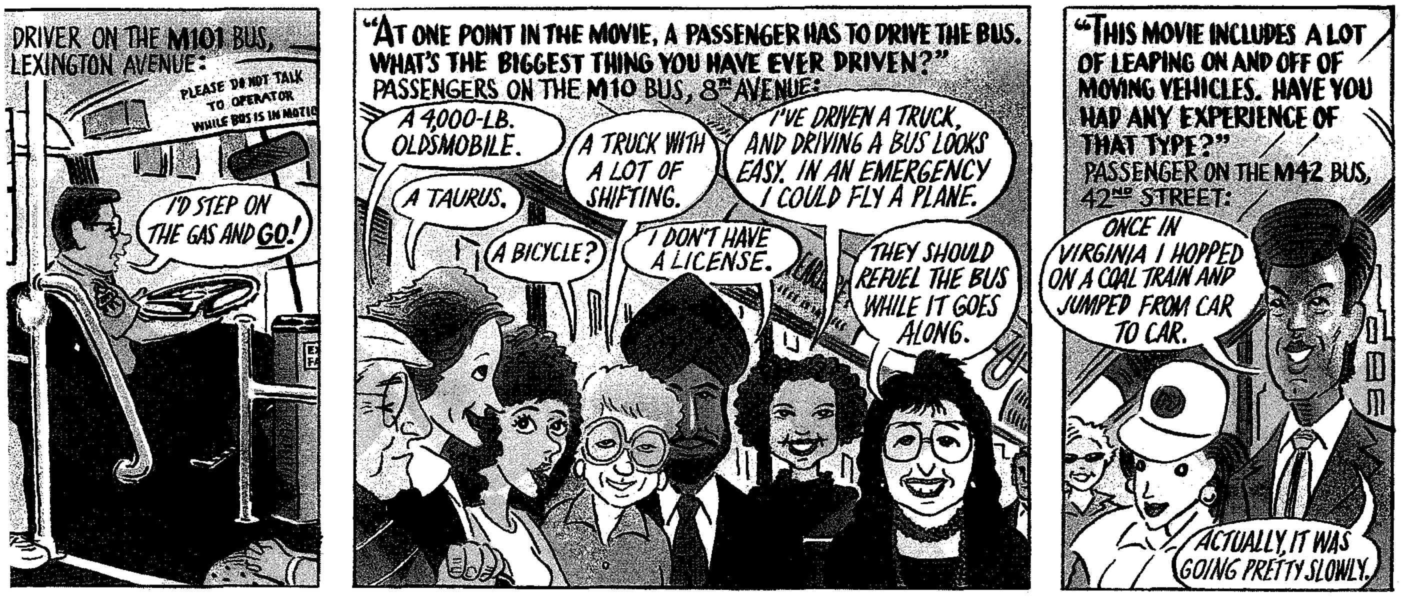
•

Lloyd: Dave says we're going to take that boat over there to the Statue of Liberty. You want to know what I said in my speech? I said thanks to my sister Precious for raising me since my mother passed. And I said that because I had someone who cared for me I don't hang with a gang.

LeAlan: Hey, Dave, is that the Statue of Liberty? Dave, can we stop at the souvenirs? I want some souvenirs.

Lloyd: I want some T-shirts and—ummm, can I get this whistle?

LeAlan: I want to get my ears pierced. Excuse me, ma'am, which are


DRIVER ON THE M101 BUS, LEXINGTON AVENUE:
PLEASE DO NOT TALK TO OPERATOR WHILE BUS IS IN MOTIO
I'D STEP ON THE GAS AND GO!
"AT ONE POINT IN THE MOVIE, A PASSENGER HAS TO DRIVE THE BUS. WHAT'S THE BIGGEST THING YOU HAVE EVER DRIVEN?"
PASSENGERS ON THE M10 BUS, 8TH AVENUE:
A 4,000-LB. OLDSMOBILE.
A TRUCK WITH A LOT OF SHIFTING.
I'VE DRIVEN A TRUCK, AND DRIVING A BUS LOOKS EASY. IN AN EMERGENCY I COULD FLY A PLANE.
A TAURUS.
A BICYCLE?
I DON'T HAVE A LICENSE.
THEY SHOULD REFUEL THE BUS WHILE IT GOES ALONG.
"THIS MOVIE INCLUDES A LOT OF LEAPING ON AND OFF OF MOVING VEHICLES. HAVE YOU HAD ANY EXPERIENCE OF THAT TYPE?"
PASSENGER ON THE M42 BUS, 42ND STREET:
ONCE IN VIRGINIA I HOPPED ON A COAL TRAIN AND JUMPED FROM CAR TO CAR.
ACTUALLY, IT WAS GOING PRETTY SLOWLY.

earrings for a man? Dave, I'm going to get my ears pierced at the souvenir stand.

Dave: LeAlan, I don't think they pierce ears at a souvenir stand. Anyway, we have to call your grandmother and get her permission first. You can't pierce your ears unless we talk to your grandmother.

Lloyd: We go back to Chicago tonight. Maybe we can stay longer. Dave, can we stay longer? Hey, Dave, tell us again how you picked me and LeAlan to do the radio show. You had to choose us, right? There were a lot of other kids who wanted to do it, right?

Dave: That's right, Lloyd.

Lloyd: And why did you choose us, Dave? Tell me again why you chose us.

Dave: Because you were funny and smart, Lloyd, and because I liked you.

MAYA LIN'S MOMENT

Maya Lin, the young American architect and sculptor, has been famous around the world for thirteen years as the designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.—the beloved monument that has done so much to help heal the wounds from that war. Maya Lin was only twenty-one, and a Yale undergraduate, when she beat out dozens of famous architects and won a national competition for the design of the Memorial; and for a while it seemed as if she had taken on a terrible burden and would have to spend the rest of her life as America's official commemorator and consoler. All her recent work, however—still quiet, still intimate, still intense—has to do with underlining the everydayness of life. One morning last week, we went down to the Bowery to visit her, in the loft she lives and works in, and to talk about her latest project, which has been five years in the making—a gorgeous overhead solar system of a clock she calls "Eclipsed Time," which will be unveiled later this summer in a corner of Pennsylvania Station that a hundred thousand people pour through daily.

The clock will be in the Long Island Rail Road portion of the station, which now, three decades after New York lost its original Penn Station, is seeing many long-overdue improvements, among them a vaulted concourse that has been fitted with marble walls and filled with light; the station's first new entrance in years and years; and an application of StoneLok, a miraculous new coating for granite floors which repels chewing gum. The centerpiece of all this unexpected betterment is to be the clock, a project that was commissioned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Arts for Transit program. The clock is positioned fifteen feet above commuters' heads, right at the point where the new entrance and the old concourse intersect, and at first glance it looks nothing at all like a clock but, rather, like a sort of modern-day flat, ceiling-mounted sundial. Inside a giant oval is a whitely glowing frosted-glass disk, with the numbers one through eleven etched across it. A second disk, this one of lacquered aluminum, slides its way across the glass and the numbers, eclipsing them, and marking the hours. Somehow, glancing at the clock seems to set up a link—a connection—between the lives of dashing commuters and the slower movements (as we perceive them) of earth and sun.

"I'm nervous—I know I just chopped a hole in the top of the railroad's corridor and dropped this sculpture in." Maya Lin told us, looking completely composed. She was sitting in an old wooden chair, and Trout, a sixteen-pound gray cat, lay curled up on her lap and licked her fingers. She had already served us iced tea and a slice of birthday cake left over from the birthday party of a friend's three-year-old. "My assignment was not to design anything that you could sit on or sleep on or that would slow people down when they were galloping for a train. I hope this piece works for people. Can an artist talk to people at all in such a rushed place? That's what I'm trying to do with the clock: give them two moments when with a glance they can calm themselves, steady themselves, get a little more ready for the next step—a moment on the way to work, a moment on the way home." ♦

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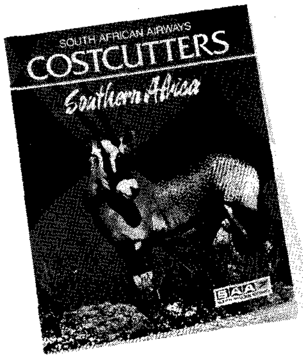

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE PRINCELING

Leon Panetta's appointment as White House chief of staff is more than just another personnel shuffle. It's the commissioning of a general in a political war.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

"WHEN I was at O.M.B.," Leon Panetta told me last Wednesday, two days after his appointment as White House chief of staff, "it was hard to find time to go to the bathroom. Now I can't eat. Maybe it's all working out."

President Clinton's summoning of Panetta from the Office of Management and Budget to become second-in-command in the West Wing was not simply part of a generic Washington shuffle. It was essential political preparation for the great battle over health care, with Panetta in the role of a general.

Mack McLarty, Clinton's original chief of staff, who was shuffled into the position of counsellor, had been hobbled by virtue of being one of the President's oldest friends—a blessing that has been mixed for other members of Clinton's Arkansas circle as well. When Clinton took office, the two classmates from Miss Mary's kindergarten in Hope, Arkansas, were reunited in the White House. Clinton's and McLarty's careers had run on somewhat parallel lines, with Clinton attaining political preëminence while McLarty, after a brief detour in the Arkansas State Legislature, rose to the top of one of the state's largest corporations. On being named chief of staff, McLarty was ostensibly charged by Clinton with importing his managerial skills into the White House, but his true role was to serve as a reassuring friend for a stranger in a strange land. Unfortunately, the friend was even more of a stranger in Washington than Clinton was. McLarty walked warily, as though at any moment he might step into an unmarked airshaft. He acted on the misapprehension that Washington, like Little Rock, could be won over by friendliness. There was no falsity to his glad-handing. His nickname, Mack the Nice, captured the man, but some used the moniker in a denigrating way: to them his niceness proved his failure of assimilation, his lack of savvy.

McLarty responded to difficulties mainly with redoubled efforts at managerial competence, even bringing business consultants into the White House. What the consultants did not reveal to him is that the attempt to solve political problems with managerial techniques is perhaps the most common and undermining error of businessmen who come into government. Nor could the consultants penetrate and alter the intimacy of his relationship with the President, in which McLarty's affection often assumed the form of deference and contributed to Presidential indecision. McLarty was best at providing comfort and a sense of decency, and not only to the President. But his devotion, perversely, helped foster political discomfort, which only inspired him to try harder. His idea of service did not allow him to exercise the powers of his office, and as long as he occupied it no one else could use them, either. A succession of compensatory figures from David Gergen to Harold Ickes to Lloyd Cutler could not fill the vacuum from the sides.

McLarty's limitations were hardly a state secret. They had been widely reported and remarked upon in the press even before they were detailed in Bob Woodward's recent book, "The Agenda." But the authority of Woodward's name on a hardcover sealed the judgment. (McLarty, for his part, was among the few around Clinton who had dealt with Woodward deftly—he did not tell all.) Some of those who wished for McLarty's removal worried that the scourging he received from Woodward's sources would only play on the President's sympathy. They did not know that discussions about replacing the chief of staff "began more than a couple of months before the book came out," Panetta told me.

The change was prompted by more than criticism and poll ratings. It was based ultimately on Clinton's political reading of the tasks now facing the Administration—in the period when its historical reputation is likely to be largely fixed. Before the midterm elections, the heart of Clinton's legislative program, especially health care, will be debated by the Congress. Because of predictable midterm losses, the next Congress will almost certainly be less favorably disposed. Inescapably, the greatest battle must be fought now. If ever there was a moment for something resembling congressional government, this is it. "We're in a period where we have to have the legislative agenda," Panetta said. "To a large extent, the fate of this Administration depends on getting it."

PANETTA is an ex-officio member of the congressional leadership. He was elected to the House of Representatives from Northern California in 1976; his classmates included Dick Gephardt, now the Majority Leader, and David Bonior, now the House Democratic Whip. Panetta became one of the best-liked members of the House, being both emotive and accommodating. He was respected for his dogged good humor and for the energy he brought to the thankless role of chairman of the Budget Committee. "The Democrats in Congress feel that this is our guy," former Representative Thomas Downey, of New York, told me. "They want to walk an extra mile for Leon. He knows the game." Howard Paster, the former White House legislative liaison, said, "Leon knows when to be aggressive and conciliatory, how to pick off members, isolate them, close a deal. He knows where to settle, when, and all the intermediate judgments."

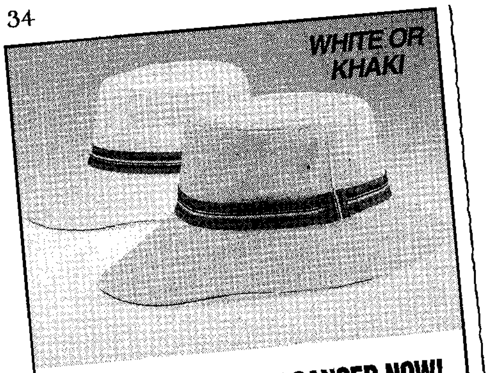
Panetta scarcely knew Clinton before he was chosen as the director of the O.M.B. During his tenure, he was a relentless advocate of reducing the deficit, causing friction with some of the President's political advisers, though not with Clinton himself. But it was the sheer political skill Panetta displayed in negotiating with the Cabinet and with Congress that recommended him to Clinton for elevation. "My experience with the President was one of the large reasons he selected me," Panetta told me. "What I found through the budget process was that if you present decisions in an organized context and give him a clear description of the problems and the issues, with options that are tight, not loose, he'll ask questions and then make a decision. He felt confident that we would try to manage the White House in a way similar to the way we were managing O.M.B."

Leon Panetta is the son of Italian immigrants who prospered through their hard work. His father was a restaurateur and a farmer—and was a classic success story. Politically, the Panettas associated the virtues of success with the liberal-minded nobility of the old Republican Party. To this day, Panetta has hanging in his office a photograph of the exemplar of the type: his hero, Earl Warren, governor of California and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Panetta's early Republicanism and his conversion to the Democratic Party explain many of his past actions and his approach to his current task.

"I was raised in California when the whole tenor of the state was progressive Republicanism," Panetta told me. "Earl Warren was someone I grew up with, who believed in civil rights and always represented public service to me." Panetta's first job in politics was as an aide to Senator Thomas Kuchel, a progressive California Republican in the Warren tradition. When Richard Nixon, who came from another wing of the California Party, was elected President, Panetta was made chief of civil-rights enforcement in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Nixon sought to undermine efforts at integration. Panetta resisted, and in 1970 he was fired. Shortly afterward, he became a Democrat. "The Party started moving to Southern strategies," Panetta said. "The worst thing I saw was Spiro Agnew campaigning against Charles Goodell"—a liberal Republican senator from New York. "You could see the Party beginning to eat itself up from the inside."

Now Panetta is the chief of staff on whose skills the success of a Democratic Presidency greatly depends. His instinct is to build bipartisan coalitions, but he must cope with the acceleration of the rightward movement within the Republican Party, which led him to reject it years ago. "In the Congress, your preference is always to work with a bipartisan group," Panetta said. "The danger I've seen more and more, particularly now with the Republicans in the House, is that there is almost a knee-jerk opposition, which forces you basically into a partisan mode or prevents you from getting anything done. That creates bitter feelings and distorts the legislative process. On health care, there are some decent Republicans trying to work through the process. But I'm a little surprised by Bob Dole. He's decided he's running for President. He's worried about his right wing. In any past year, he'd be a lot more constructive in trying to develop something." Faced with Republican intransigence, Panetta redoubles his political resolve. "The best result is to try to get it on a bipartisan basis," he said. "But you have to get it done. If you can't get it done with Republicans, you have to get it done with Democrats. You can't sit on your hands and move your head back and forth in frustration. You have to get it done."

Two days after McLarty left his post, he remarked in a speech to the National Press Club, "I think what this White House really needs is a chief of staff who can read Machiavelli in the original Italian." This was both a kind of epitaph and a plea: someone is needed who can decipher the foreign language of Washington. At one point during Clinton's visit to Rome in early June, his translator was Leon Panetta. ♦



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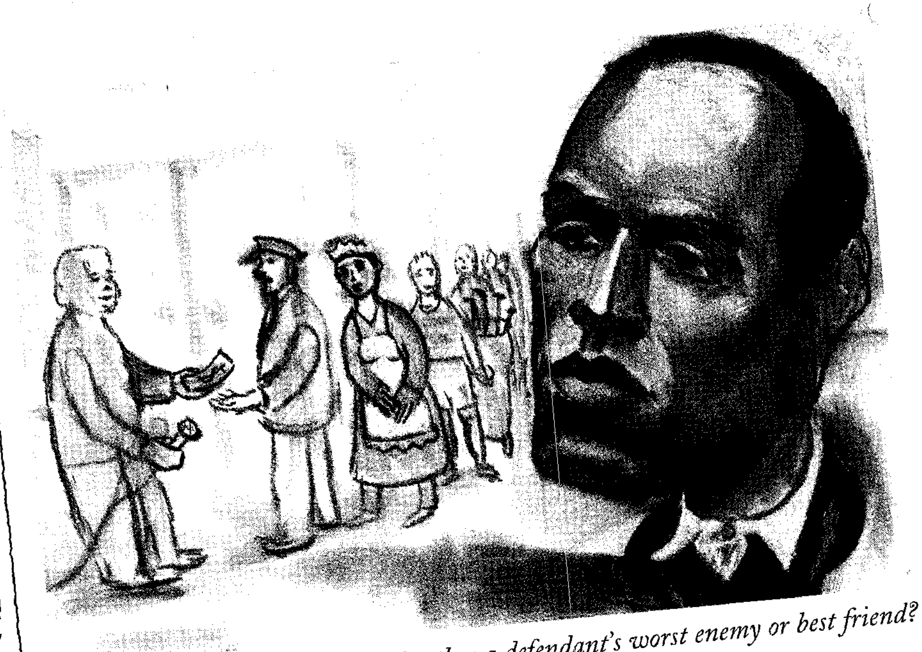
ANNALS OF LAW

CASH FOR TRASH

The tabloid stories surrounding O. J. Simpson are damning, but following the latest trend in high-profile criminal cases, they may help set him free.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN



Witnesses who sell their stories: Are they a defendant's worst enemy or best friend?

AHMET GORGUN

Robert Owens, an attorney from Los Angeles, had a cellular phone in one hand, a pen in the other, the sand of a Maui beach between his toes, and the riches of an O. J. Simpson-obsessed media on his mind. He represents Dale St. John, the owner of Town & Country Limousine, of Torrance, California, which is the company that sent a car to pick up the former football star and take him to the airport on what is now invariably referred to as "the fateful night" of June 12, 1994. "Obviously, Dale was one of the first people the police spoke to, and I know that what he said to them has not been published anywhere so far," Owens told me, over his phone, in a tone of shared intimacy. "Remember, Dale drove O. J. personally for several years, and he also had a lot of contact with the driver on the night of the murders. He hasn't made a deal with anyone yet, and he hasn't spoken to anyone yet, but he's at the point now where he's ready to make a deal with someone. That's why he called me."

Owens symbolizes the state of the art in one of the newest specialties in the legal market—the brokering of interviews to the tabloid media. The cash-for-trash bar is not organized in any official sense—many of its practitioners dip in and out for just a single sale—but its influence is soaring in the prosecution of high-profile criminal cases. Because witnesses who take money from tabloids automatically raise questions about their credibility, and because defense attorneys can so successfully vilify those witnesses on cross-examination, the practice of buying and selling interviews seriously threatens prosecutors' abilities to try high-profile cases. Ironically, the print and television tabloids that fuel this industry have been widely denounced for their supposed rush to convict celebrity defendants before they have even been tried; as it happens, however, the tabloids can so taint the central witnesses in the government's case that tabloid infotainment may actually be the best friend a famous defendant can have. The torrent of press coverage of the Simpson case, tabloid and otherwise, has already cost the prosecution dearly. On June 24th, Judge Cecil J. Mills, of California Superior

Court, dismissed the grand jury investigating the case, because some jurors had been exposed to "potentially prejudicial matters not officially presented to them by the district attorney."

Certainly, it seems, the Los Angeles Police Department has come to recognize the costs of saturation coverage. This official acknowledgment came in a little-noticed coda to the first public announcement of the murder of Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. After giving the basic facts about the case, such as the names of the victims and the place where the bodies were found, Commander David Gascon issued a plea to the news media. "Over the next few days, detectives will continue to interview possible witnesses, and gather and analyze evidence," Gascon said on June 13th. "Detectives are requesting that the media not attempt to contact potential witnesses in this case, as those contacts may delay and negatively impact the course of this investigation. I need to stress that. It's critically important."

Steve Dunleavy, who is the lead correspondent for Fox television's "A Current Affair" and is also the Australian elder statesman of the tabloid industry, first heard about Gascon's request when I mentioned it to him, a few days later, in the course of a telephone call. "With all due respect to the L.A. police, they're a little Pollyanna when they ask reporters not to talk to witnesses," Dunleavy said. "We have an L.A. guy, and I'm just sort of tits on a reindeer out here, mate, but this is the story people are talking about, and we've got to be here." In fact, on the day that Dunleavy and I spoke, he had just interviewed Michael Mesko, a caddie at the Riviera Country Club, who had toted O. J. Simpson's bag around the course only hours before the murders took place. Mesko told Dunleavy that Simpson was alternately angry and maudlin during his round, and that at one point Simpson "turns to me and says, 'Mitch, I'm a pathetic person.' " Mesko added, "I was shocked." Dunleavy now chuckled, and said, "Nice little scoop for us. But, if that's how the police feel, best of luck to them, eh?"

Dunleavy's view also seems to be that of his colleagues in the tabloid press. "It's not just going to be witnesses in the case itself," one reporter for a supermarket tabloid told me. "Every woman O. J. went out with, every secretary, everyone who worked with him—they're all going to be hitting the money." Indeed, the buying of witnesses has already begun. A week after the murders, Paramount's television tabloid "Hard Copy" agreed to pay a potentially crucial witness named Jill Shively five thousand dollars for her recollections of the night of June 12th. Holding up her grand-jury subpoena for the cameras, Shively said that she had seen a harried O. J. Simpson driving his Ford Bronco wildly near his home in Brentwood at about eleven o'clock. Adapting nicely to the overheated tabloid idiom, she declared that Simpson looked "like a madman gone mad, insane." At around the same time, the supermarket tabloid the *Star* paid Shively two thousand six hundred dollars for a print interview. And last week, at the preliminary hearing in the Simpson case, two of the prosecution's opening witnesses revealed that they, too, had been paid for interviews with a tabloid. Allen Wattenberg, a co-owner of Ross Cutlery, the store where O. J. Simpson bought a knife shortly before the murders, and José Camacho, a salesman at the store, testified that they would be splitting a twelve-thousand-five-hundred-dollar payment from the *National Enquirer* with Allen's brother and partner, Richard.

Shively and the knife dealers sold themselves cheap. The *Enquirer* offered at least a hundred thousand dollars for an interview with Kato Kaelin, a family friend who was staying in the guesthouse at Simpson's estate on the night of the murders. "The guy from the *Enquirer* made it clear that the hundred thousand was negotiable," Kaelin's lawyer, William Genego, told me shortly after the offer was received. "He was clearly willing to go higher." Indeed, the *Enquirer* raised its offer to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars last week. But, Genego said, his client turned the offer down, along with all other interview requests, because "he didn't want to get into that whole distasteful business." Yet the tabloids expect to find no shortage of takers as they continue to offer money to witnesses in the Simpson case. "The thing of it is that the really big guns have not come up for bid yet," a tabloid editor told me ten days after the murders. "No one even knows the name yet of the limo driver. He'd be worth plenty. And the biggest money of all is for Al Cowlings"—Simpson's best friend, who was the driver in his nation-

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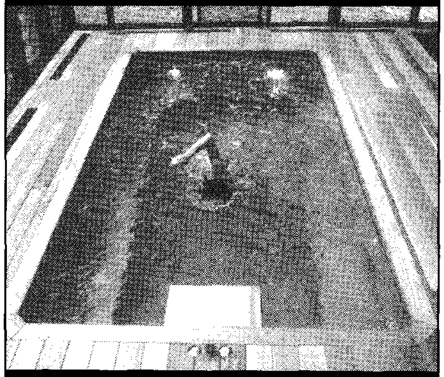

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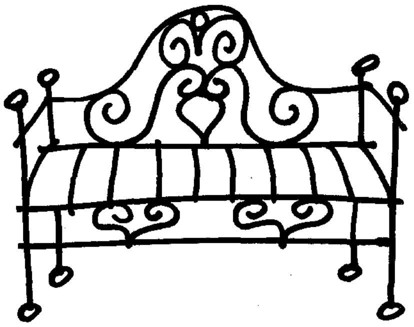
ally televised chase along the Los Angeles freeways.

But as Dale St. John, for one, is discovering, this form of information entrepreneurship is treacherous, and calls for negotiating expertise. In the days immediately after the murders, St. John erred by peddling his story directly to tabloid reporters instead of leaving it up to his lawyer to drop tantalizing morsels. "Dale calls here every day, but we're done with him now," a "Hard Copy" employee told me. Indeed, this person said, St. John was the source for a "Hard Copy" scoop, on June 16th, reporting that Simpson was not at his estate when the limousine driver came to pick him up at ten-forty-five on the night of the murders; it was fifteen minutes later that a sweaty and agitated Simpson showed up for his ride. "Dale's got nothing more to sell us," the "Hard Copy" employee said.

Owens, St. John's lawyer, remained confident. "Dale's been approached by a number of different media outlets, a couple of TV shows, and two of the magazines," he said. "Our low offer at this point is fifteen thousand dollars and a trip to Hawaii for Dale, his wife, and their three kids. The top offer is fifty thousand dollars, from the *Enquirer*, but Dale doesn't want to deal with them. I'm still expecting more, and I figure Dale and I will be closing the deal any day now. That's why I interrupted my vacation to help him."

CREDIT (or blame) for the creation of the modern cash-for-trash industry belongs to the United States Supreme Court, according to John Terenzio, a former executive producer of "A Current Affair." "When they struck down the Son of Sam law, that's when everything started to change," he told me recently. The so-called Son of Sam law was passed by the New York State Legislature in 1977 to prevent David Berkowitz (who sent notes to the police signed "Son of Sam") from capitalizing on his notoriety as a serial killer. The measure made it illegal for criminals to earn income from selling stories about their misdeeds. In 1991, however, the Supreme Court ruled that the law violated the First Amendment. "Once that law was gone, we knew that the day would come when the Jeffrey Dahmers of the world would make a bundle," Terenzio said. "I wouldn't pay a convicted criminal, but it opened our eyes to what was out there—the deals to be made." The supermarket tabloids, led by the *Enquirer*, which has a weekly readership of nearly twenty million, have had no trouble keeping pace. I was told by David Perel, an editor at the *Enquirer*, "If someone has a great story to sell, and it can be exclusive for us, the price may be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and we're going to pay it."

"The economics are really very good for buying stories," Terenzio said. "With all your everyday costs—salaries, sending crews out, and whatnot—let's say it costs you fifty thousand dollars a day to put the show on the air. Now, let's say you pay someone like Gennifer Flowers twenty-five thousand dollars for an interview. She comes into the office, so you don't have to spend a lot on producing the spot. You probably can get two segments out of it, adding up to maybe a third of two different shows. Ten or twenty thousand dollars is still a lot of money to most people on the street, but if you pay that for an interview it's really not that different from our basic costs." According to several tabloid executives, it was the Amy Fisher–Joey Buttafuoco affair last year that first pushed prices into the stratosphere. A Fox check-authorization form that was provided to me showed that "A Current Affair" paid Buttafuoco five hundred thousand dollars for his coöperation. "The bottom line is that if you have a bad book"—that is, bad ratings during the sweeps period—"it can cost you millions of dollars in advertising," Terenzio explained. An executive at another television tabloid agreed. "The sweeps mean everything," this person said. "But not all the sweeps are the same. The November book is the most important, and, since our year starts in the fall, that's when we have the most money to spend on people. February is next, and by the time May sweeps come around we usually don't have much more money anyway. If you have a story to sell, November is the time you want to do it."



That the Michael Jackson child-abuse case exploded during the November sweeps last year is a source of everlasting dismay to Lauren Weis, who has been a deputy district attorney in Los Angeles for fifteen years and, as the head of the Sexual Crimes and Child Abuse Division, is leading the investigation of the singer for sexual abuse of children. By chance, she heard Commander Gascon's announcement of the Simpson murder, including his plea to the media to stay away from witnesses. "I certainly took note of what he said," she remarked to me recently. "I had never seen that before in a press statement by the police, but the times have changed. There's certainly been nothing before on the scale of what happened in my case."

In the light of her experience, Weis may have become the nation's foremost authority on the damage that the tabloids can inflict on a criminal investigation. "It's obvious that once witnesses have been paid a great deal of money their value as witnesses is lessened, in the sense that jurors will always wonder whether they're saying what they're saying because they were paid to say it," she said. "As a prosecutor, you can try to lessen the damage. You can say that they had already been interviewed by the police, and you hope to be able to show that once they were paid by the tabloids their story didn't vary. You can try to corroborate them with what other witnesses have said. But the damage is there." So incensed is Weis about the tabloids that she told me she was planning to propose legislation in California that would make the buying of interviews a crime in some cases. "I have actually been considering discussing some legislation where it would be illegal to pay a potential witness money to discuss a pending investigation. The law would say that when someone has reason to know there is a pending investigation that person can't be paid any money, so that the criminal prosecution would not be affected. I know that it would be challenged on First Amendment grounds, but I think that it would be upheld. I think it's worth it."

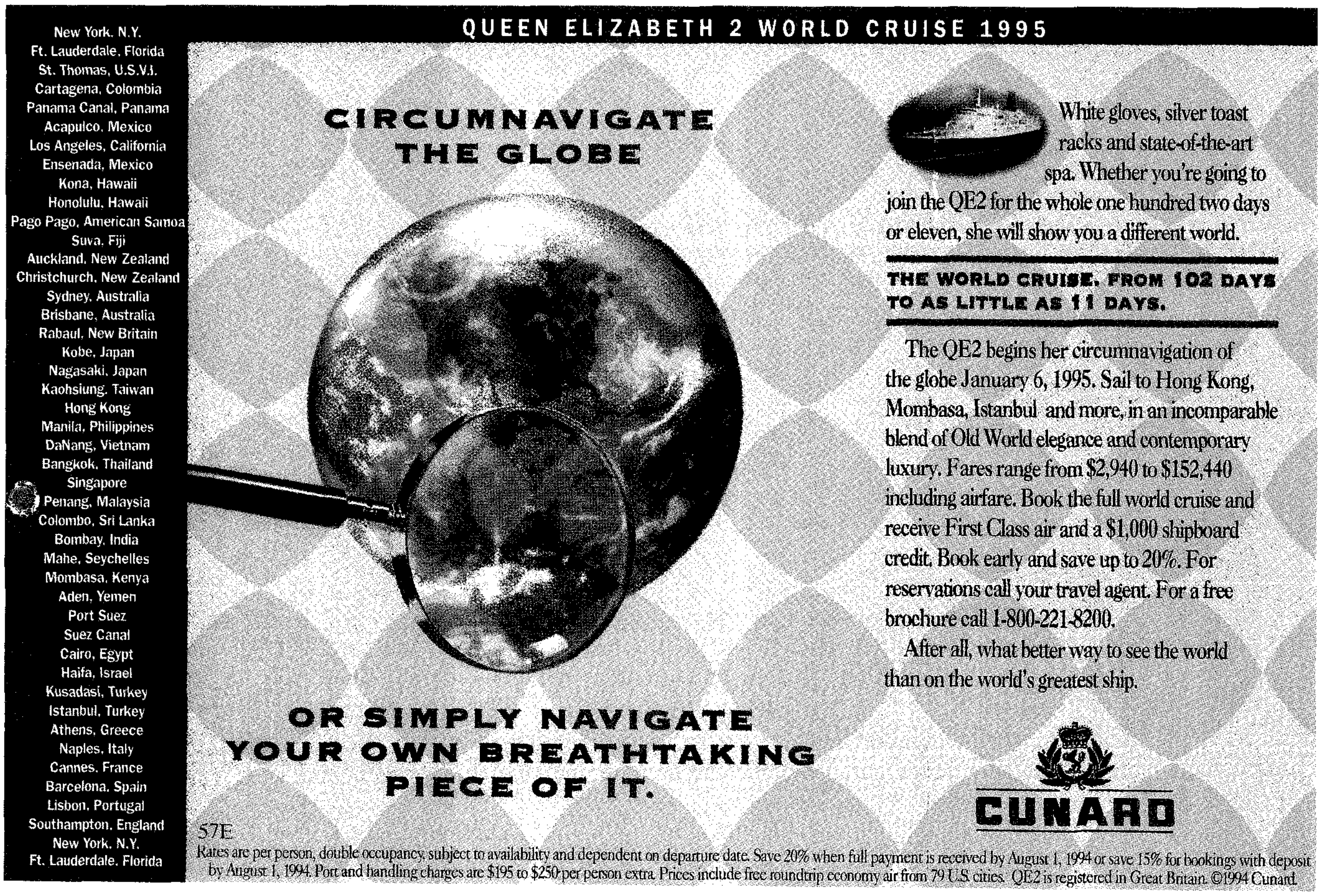
At present, as Weis's indignation makes clear, no legal or ethical rule bars lawyers from shopping their clients' stories from tabloid to tabloid. Deborah Rhode, a professor of law at Stanford

Law School and the director of a legal-ethics center there, explained the situation by saying, "As the lawyer, your obligation would be to discuss the pros and cons with the client. You'd probably have to remind the client to balance the money he's getting against certain costs, such as long-term damage to his reputation. But it's true that it may be in both the lawyer's and the client's immediate interest to sell the story, especially if the lawyer's getting a percentage of the deal as a fee. The public has an interest in seeing the criminal process move ahead unimpeded, but the conventional answer is that we don't expect lawyers to suspend their obligations to the client out of broader societal concerns."

As the prosecutors in the Simpson case set out to assess the threat that the tabloids will pose to the proceedings, they would do well to consider the example of Ted Mathews. He was one of their own—a former Los Angeles deputy district attorney in the sexual-assault unit. For that reason in particular, he is a special object of Lauren Weis's fury: she is now the head of Mathews' old unit. If, as many people expect, the Michael Jackson case ends without an indictment, Mathews may bear some responsibility for it. At the very least, Mathews' story is a sobering case study of the costs to society of the alliance between aggressive lawyers and the tabloid media.

Thinning brown hair and tired eyes make Ted Mathews look older than his age, which is forty-six, and he also has a vast half-moon of a belly, which seems somehow to stretch from his neck to his knees. In two decades as a private lawyer following his stint as a prosecutor, Mathews has established a small practice and an inauspicious record in high-profile cases. In the mid-nineteen-eighties, for example, Mathews assisted in the defense of Marvin Pancoast, who was charged with bludgeoning to death Vicki Morgan, the former mistress of Ronald Reagan's friend Alfred Bloomingdale; Pancoast was convicted, was sentenced to twenty-six years to life, and died in prison in 1991. More recently, Mathews represented Monica Harmon, a receptionist for the Hollywood producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, in a lawsuit against them for wrongful dismissal. Pretrial proceedings disclosed that Harmon herself had engaged in some of the behavior that she accused Simpson of—it seemed that she had used cocaine during the period in question and had rented pornographic videos for her own purposes—and the case was summarily thrown out before trial.

Last fall, however, fortune smiled on Mathews, in the form of the "Jackson five." Five former bodyguards at Michael Jackson's estate, in Encino, California, arrived on Mathews' doorstep bearing potentially lucrative troubles. The five men told Mathews, who by then was practicing with another lawyer on a quiet street in Pasadena, that they believed they had been fired because they'd learned of their employer's pedophilia. Late on the afternoon of November 22, 1993, Mathews filed a lawsuit on their behalf against Jackson and several of his associates charging that the guards had been unjustly dismissed. When I visited Mathews recently, he still seemed to be savoring the reaction of the press to that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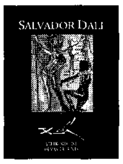

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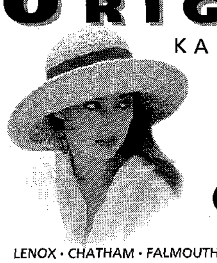

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move. "As soon as we filed, they were all over us like a cheap suit," he told me. Mathews' desk chair whimpered as he leaned back to open a seldom used drawer and remove a two-inch-thick pile of telephone messages. "I kept my messages from that time, just because there were so many," he said, and he began reading some of them to me. "David Perel, *National Enquirer*. Jeff Kull, 'Inside Edition.' Steff from the Sally Jesse Raphaël show. Erica from the Maury Povich show. Neal Harmon, 'Good Morning Great Britain.'

"We started getting offers from lots of different places—the talk shows, the tabloid shows," Mathews went on. "They kept asking me, 'How much did the others offer you?' I was totally amazed. One very sexy lady came to see me on behalf of one of the shows, and she never said so directly, but I got the sense that she would be—you know—available if that would help her show get an interview. As the money offers started coming in, I had to report them to my clients. They had been out of work for some time at that point, so they were interested." Because Mathews was representing the guards on a contingency-fee basis, he, too, stood to benefit from the proceeds of the sale of interviews.

The war among the tabloids was brief but intense. It began the morning of November 23rd, the day the lawsuit hit the newspapers, when Mick Hamilton, the features editor of the London newspaper the *News of the World*, faxed a letter to Mathews saying that his paper was "extremely interested in the story of life with Michael Jackson" and adding, "We are prepared to offer a substantial sum for your clients' exclusive memoirs." Hamilton urged the lawyer to allow "our accredited West Coast correspondents … to sit down with you and assess the material before we make a financial offer." There was no such hesitation on the part of the *National Enquirer*. At 2:02 P.M., David Perel faxed Mathews a letter saying, "We are prepared to offer $80,000 (eighty thousand dollars) for world rights to interview them about their interaction with Michael Jackson and associated parties." Perel explained further, "As you may know, the *Enquirer* has the largest circulation of any newspaper in America. We are prepared to consider any and all terms you may set as conditions for this deal and would like to go to contract immediately."

The three major syndicated tabloid television shows took only a little longer to mobilize. At 8:29 P.M., Jeff Cole and Pam Burke, of Kingworld's "Inside Edition," also faxed a letter to Mathews, this one saying, "INSIDE EDITION is prepared to offer fifty thousand dollars for the exclusive interview with your five clients," and adding, "This information is confidential." David Shumacher, a Los Angeles-based journalist serving as Rupert Murdoch's emissary in the negotiations, represented both the *News of the World* and Fox's "A Current Affair." Two weeks ago, he returned my call by cellular telephone from the sidewalk outside O. J. Simpson's house in Brentwood. "I was on the phone with Ted trying to get the story for sixty-five thousand for 'A Current Affair' and the *News of the World*," Shumacher recalled. "But Ted was holding out for more."

Mathews got more. Paramount's "Hard Copy" vaulted ahead of its competitors last year, in significant measure because of its aggressive coverage of the Jackson case. Its staff was determined not to be beaten in obtaining an interview with two of the guards, who were the spokesmen for the five. In a fax sent by "Hard Copy" just ten minutes before midnight on November 23rd—still only a day after the suit was filed—the program and Ted Mathews concluded a deal. Linda Ellman, a co-executive producer of the broadcast, wrote Mathews, "You represent that you are the attorney and authorized agent for the five former security guards who have just commenced litigation against Michael Jackson. You further represent that, in exchange for a total of $100,000.00, Leroy Thomas and Morris Williams, two of the Plaintiffs, will agree to an interview by Diane Diamond [sic]." (Diane Dimond is the show's star correspondent.) The agreement went on to reserve a second interview with the pair—"for no additional compensation"—for "The Maury Povich Show," which is also produced by Paramount. Ellman's letter concluded, "HARD COPY will render the check … by noon on Wednesday, November 24, 1993. … HARD COPY will not broadcast the interview until the check has been delivered to you." On November 29th, "Hard Copy" broadcast the first of three days' worth of Dimond's highly rated interviews with the two guards. Maury Povich also wrung a pair of shows from the guards' story, on De-

Bernard Schoenbaum

"The end of the Year of the Dog won't come too soon for me."

• •

cember 13, 1993, and February 21, 1994. According to the guards' deposition testimony in their lawsuit against Jackson, each of the five received fifteen to seventeen thousand dollars, leaving Mathews with about twenty thousand as his commission. In our talk, Mathews declined to reveal his fee.

The interviews with the guards proved to be not just a one-shot deal but, rather, the beginning of a mutually beneficial relationship between "Hard Copy" and Ted Mathews—one that symbolizes the growing symbiosis between the tabloid press and the lawyers in the cash-for-trash bar. The aim of that alliance, of course, was money—for Mathews, for his clients, and, as the residue of high ratings, for "Hard Copy" and Paramount. How the buying and selling of witnesses' testimony might affect an active criminal investigation; whether crucial witnesses might be discredited by the fact that they auctioned their memories; how the assembled appetites might, in the end, help a serial pedophile escape punishment—these matters, it appears, never came up in the negotiations.

The second phase of Ted Mathews' alliance with "Hard Copy" began last February. In addition to the probe undertaken by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, a grand jury in Santa Barbara had been impanelled to weigh possible child-abuse charges against Jackson, and Dimond was pursuing the story at the Santa Barbara courthouse. She had heard that Norma Staikos, a former top aide to Jackson, was going to be called to testify before the grand jury, and she wanted an interview with—or, at least, a camera shot of—the elusive Staikos. But, though Dimond moved into a Santa Barbara motel to wait out the hearing, she saw no sign of her. Dimond sulked. And she took to commiserating with an unfamiliar figure who, it became clear, was keeping an eye out for the same woman.

Dimond, who is forty-two years old, had come to "Hard Copy" after long stints with WCBS news in New York and, before that, National Public Radio. (She was on vacation in New Mexico when the Simpson story broke, but she came home to participate in "Hard Copy" 's coverage.) Friendly to the point of ebullience (picture a nursery-school teacher in an Armani suit and an expensive haircut), she had no trouble starting up a conversation with the stranger. "Little by little, this woman on the sidewalk started to tell me about herself," Dimond said to me recently over lunch in the Paramount commissary. "It turns out her name was Charli Michaels, and she had been a security guard at Neverland, Michael's ranch. Norma had fired her, and Charli wanted to look into Norma's eyes as she was forced to go into the grand jury. Charli was angry, furious, and she wanted to see Norma suffering a little, too."

Under Dimond's coaxing, Charli Michaels gradually told the story of her firing. The real reason, according to Michaels, was that she, like the guards, "knew too much" about Jackson's relationships with young boys. "After we had talked for a while," Dimond recalled, "Charli told me she saw Michael fondling a little boy who was staying with him." Michaels told Dimond, "I'm afraid and I don't know what to do—I just wanted to see that evil Norma."

"Have you talked to the police?" Dimond asked.

Michaels hedged. "I did talk to them once, but I didn't tell them everything. I was afraid," she said.

So Dimond took matters into her own hands. First, she walked Michaels up the courthouse steps and introduced her to detectives who were assisting in the grand-jury investigation. "A while later," Dimond went on to tell me, "Charli came out of the building in tears, and I said to her, 'You've got to get a lawyer.' She said, 'I don't know anybody, and I don't have any money to hire one anyway.' "

Dimond put Michaels in touch with Ted Mathews, who she was sure wouldn't charge Michaels a thing up front. After Michaels did in fact retain Mathews, he telephoned Dimond to thank her for the referral. Dimond then reminded Mathews (as if it were necessary), "You know me—I like to break the big Michael Jackson stories."

Mathews laughed. "I have a feeling you'll be hearing from me again," Dimond recalls him saying.

A few days later, Mathews, as he had predicted, summoned Dimond to his office in Pasadena. "I'm ready for her to tell the story," he told Dimond. "But, come on—Charli is worth double what the other guys got. She actually saw abuse." The five guards testified to having seen only suspicious comings and goings of youngsters.

Dimond was not authorized to discuss payment with Mathews, so she asked Linda Ellman, "Hard Copy" 's co-executive producer, and Steve Doron, her assignment editor, to join the conversation in Pasadena. "I introduced Linda and Steve to Ted, closed the French doors to his office, and went outside for a few minutes while they talked," she recalled.

Mathews again did well for his client. According to a letter of agreement between "Hard Copy" and Charli Michaels, dated February 17, 1994, Michaels was to receive forty-five thousand dollars up front and fifteen thousand more at a later date. "You will provide full and complete coöperation to HARD COPY in your interview with us and will be candid, honest and forthcoming in responding to the interview questions," Ellman wrote.

Five days later, "Hard Copy" opened with the co-anchor Barry Nolan in his usual perch, in front of what appears to be a bustling newsroom. (He actually sits in front of a white screen; the "newsroom" is file footage of an unrelated office in Detroit.) "She is being called a key witness in the criminal case against Michael Jackson, a woman who says what she saw behind the walls of Neverland Ranch scared her into silence—until now," Nolan said. "In a world exclusive, she tells our Diane Dimond she thinks there are more victims out there." Thus began the first of three days of broadcasts that the show teased out of Dimond's interview with Michaels, which was held in Ted Mathews' office.

The major elements of Michaels' story are, first, that she caught a glimpse of what Dimond described as a "lewd dance session" between Jackson and a young boy, and, second, that she once heard, at approximately third hand, about a boy at the ranch who said that "Michael touched him funny." (At one point during the broadcasts, Dimond acknowledged that both boys had denied that anything untoward took place.) The issue of what prompted Michaels to give the interview was raised only once. According to Dimond's narrative, it was Jackson's settlement of a civil suit by a boy who had charged the singer with sexual abuse that prompted Michaels to come forward. That, said Dimond, "made her sick enough to finally talk." The segments omitted any mention of "Hard Copy" 's sixty thousand dollars, which might also have played some part in Michaels' decision.

HOWARD WEITZMAN, who is one of two lawyers representing Michael Jackson in the child-abuse inquiry, has a videotape of Michaels' appearances on "Hard Copy," and his firm let me make a copy. (Weitzman also briefly represented O. J. Simpson.) If Jackson is charged, Weitzman will have the right to cross-examine the witnesses whom the tabloids paid. "Of course, these payments will be useful to me," he told me, in his office, in Century City. "It goes to bias and motivation. A jury can see how a witness might create a story for economic purposes."

At this point, Weitzman's associate, Zia Modabber, who was sitting in on our conversation, remarked, "You could do two hours of cross on that theme alone."

"At least," Weitzman acknowledged.

And if Weitzman ever does have to do that cross-examination—or if Robert Shapiro and F. Lee Bailey, Simpson's current trial lawyers, ever face one of the witnesses who sold his or her story to the tabloids—he will have a useful script from the trial of William Kennedy Smith. The nephew of Senator Edward M. Kennedy was charged with raping Patricia Bowman at the family estate in Palm Beach. On December 3, 1991, toward the end of Smith's trial, Anne Mercer, a friend of Bowman's, took the stand to testify that Bowman had telephoned her for assistance from the Kennedy compound after the alleged assault. The prosecutor, Moira Lasch, sought to limit the damage to her witness's credibility by bringing out, during direct examination, how Mercer came to be interviewed by "A Current Affair."

"Why did you give an interview to 'Current Affair' concerning this information?" Lasch asked.

"I believed that my police statement was out already. I had already given four statements to the police, and I didn't feel that it would harm the case in any way," Mercer replied.

"Were you paid for those interviews by 'A Current Affair'?"

"I was compensated, yes."

"How much were you paid by 'A Current Affair'?"

"Twenty-five thousand for the first interview and fifteen thousand for the second interview."

People in the courtroom that day say they will never forget the reaction at that point. "There was this gasp—a really loud one—and it just went on and on,"

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one of them recalled recently. "People were buzzing. The jury started talking. It was unbelievable."

Judge Mary E. Lupo moved to quiet the outburst: "Excuse me, there will not be an audible response to any of the questions or answers in this courtroom or it will be cleared."

Lasch tried gamely to continue. "Before you accepted those offers—"

But the noise was still so loud that the judge broke in again. "Excuse me, Mrs. Lasch, just one second," Lupo interrupted. "The jury is to disregard the opinion or expressions of opinion from members of the gallery."

Lasch did her best to rehabilitate Mercer. "Before you were interviewed by 'A Current Affair,' were you offered money by other publications?"

"Yes, I was offered one hundred fifty thousand dollars, which I turned down."

"By what publication?"

" 'A Current Affair.' " Mercer went on to say that she rejected the higher offer "because I had not given a public statement. I hadn't given my police statement yet, or the public statement wasn't out."

Bad as all this was, it might well have been worse if Mercer's lawyer had taken the stand. In representing Mercer, Raoul Lionel Felder was just dabbling in the cash-for-trash industry, for he is best known as a top New York divorce lawyer. I went to see him in his palatial office on Madison Avenue, where the walls are covered with framed press clippings about Felder and the desks are packed with Felder mementos, which range from a plaque commemorating his service as a prosecutor, years ago, to another one celebrating his appearance on "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." What I learned from Felder about the negotiations with "A Current Affair" makes it appear that Mercer's testimony featured, at best, some gilding of the lily. "We had negotiated a really big money deal for her with 'A Current Affair,' " he said, declining to specify the amount. "And the deal was all set. She was waiting for a car to pick her up and go to the airport to do the interview in New York, when the prosecution released her police statement. That just killed the market value of her story. The money she wound up getting was nothing—piddling—compared to what she almost had."

Still, even if the prosecution's version of Mercer's deal with "A Current Affair" had so shocked the jury that cross-examination was superfluous, the questioning of her by Roy Black, Smith's lawyer, made the rubble of her testimony bounce. Among other facts that Black elicited from Mercer were that she had hired Felder to negotiate her fee from "A Current Affair" in return for a ten-per-cent commission, that she had agreed to be filmed by the program walking along the beach and sitting in a boat outside the Kennedy estate, and, most important, that there were differences between the account of the alleged attack which she had given the police and the more sensational version she provided to "A Current Affair." In one of his questions about the way she described events for the police, Black said, "This is before you knew that the Kennedy name could make you a lot of money, isn't that correct?" So what if she did make money, Raoul Felder said to me. "She was able to make a sum. She didn't do anything illegal, immoral, or fattening. They offered her money and she took it." He shrugged. "It's the American way."

If that is true, then the American way has already cost the O. J. Simpson prosecution at least one witness. Jill Shively, the woman who saw a wild-eyed Simpson in his Bronco and then enjoyed the patronage of "Hard Copy" and the *Star*, might have proved to be a significant voice at the trial; her testimony casts doubt on Simpson's alibi that he was home by himself at the time of the murders. But the prosecutors in the case, Marcia Clark and David Conn, were aghast when they learned that Shively had sold her story. Shively was so shaken by Clark and Conn's reaction that she immediately hired her own attorney, James Epstein, who was summoned to an 8 A.M. meeting with the prosecutors on June 23rd. "They were absolutely furious," Epstein told me. "They said that they regarded Jill as an important witness, and she did testify in the grand jury, but they have decided not to use her anymore. Because she sold her story, they feel that the defense will be able to make it look like her testimony is false and that she only made it up to make money." ♦

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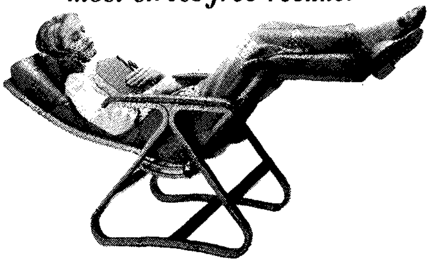

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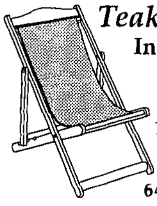

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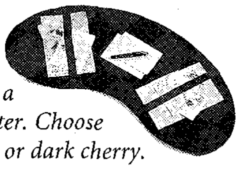

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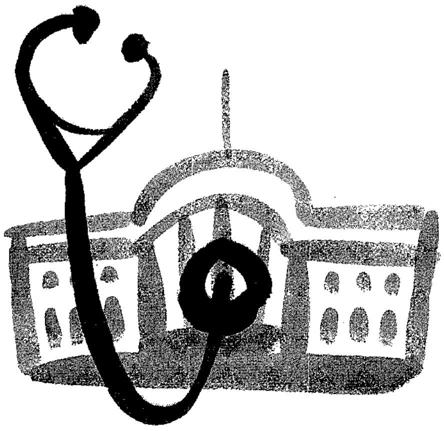
A socialized health-care system? Goodness, nobody wants that. But when you analyze the arguments, that's where everyone ends up—even the Republicans.

BY MICHAEL KINSLEY



ANDERS WENNGREN

IT'S very simple, House Minority Leader Bob Michel explains in a TV commercial sponsored by the Republican National Committee. "Yes, we can make health insurance portable now. Without the Clinton government-run health-care system. Congress simply needs to change the law so if you lose your job, you won't lose your coverage."

Characterizing the Clinton plan as an attempt to socialize one-seventh of the economy, many Republicans now argue that there is no health-care crisis that can't be taken care of through some minor adjustments in the insurance industry. Forbid discrimination based on "preëxisting conditions"—so that insurers can't turn you down, or charge you more, just because you are already sick or are more likely than average to get sick. Guarantee "portability"—so that insurers must continue to sell you coverage, at the same price, when you move or change your job. Create some new tax deductions. And—presto!—problem solved.

Insurance reform is the free lunch of health-care plans. As a political strategy, it is cynically designed to split off the great middle-class majority, which has health coverage but is frightened of losing it, from the minority, mostly the working poor, which has no coverage in the first place.

It might work politically, but it won't work in practice. Avoiding socialism in health care is harder than the Republicans—or Clinton, for that matter—would have you believe, and even harder, possibly, than they realize themselves. You can start by rejecting socialism, if you like, but you soon find yourself reinventing it.

THE first problem with insurance reform, as a purported alternative to big government, is that it's a tax increase. Republicans were quick to label the "employer mandate" in Clinton's original plan—the requirement that employers finance eighty per cent of their employees' health-care premiums—a "tax," on the reasonable ground that it would be a government-ordered payment, even though the proceeds wouldn't go to the Treasury. Insurance reform is similar. By requiring insurers to accept bad risks at nondiscriminatory rates—that is, take on customers who can now be rejected or charged more—reform will force insurers to raise prices for healthy customers.

When people are all charged the same price for insurance, regardless of their likely health-care requirements, this is called "community rating." Government-mandated community rating will raise insurance costs for healthy people for two reasons. First, the insurer will have to cover the risk of your own long-term decline in health. Right now, the company can drop you or raise your rate if you develop an expensive condition. Second, the insurer will have to pool present good risks with present bad risks. This second element amounts to a government-imposed transfer of wealth from one group of people to another. Pure community rating, then, is the socialist principle applied to health care. Everyone puts the same amount of money into the pot and is then entitled to withdraw it according to need.

Most insurance-reform proposals don't go all the way to pure community rating. They allow insurers to discriminate on the basis of a few discrete factors. Two of the most common are age and unhealthful behavior, such as smoking. But neither of these exceptions to the community-rating principle undermines the claim that insurance reform is socialism in health care, whether its proponents care to admit so or not; we all get older, we hope, and nobody needs to smoke. Even with these exceptions, insurance reform is designed to make it certain that the vagaries of fate will not be allowed to affect anyone's health-care costs.

And insurance reform is not just socialism in theory; in practice, it will require a big new government role. Ending discrimination between good and bad health risks is easier said than done. As the Princeton economist Uwe Reinhardt told the *Wall Street Journal* last month, community rating "forces a competing private insurer to look at a deathly ill patient, seeing a $100,000 bill, and cheerfully enroll that person for $2,000." Bill and Hillary Clinton were wrong to vilify insurance companies for their current practice of avoiding bad risks if they can. After all, the idea of commercial insurance is protection against the unknown, not the known or the predictable. If you sign up every hundred-thousand-dollar patient who comes along and charge him only two thousand dollars, you'll soon be out of business—unless your competitors are required to do the same, so that all of you spread the cost among other customers. But once the government does require nondiscrimination it must prevent cheating.

Writing in the journal *Health Affairs*, the Harvard health economist Joseph P. Newhouse has described various subtle ways that insurers (including health-maintenance organizations) can skew their customer base toward healthier people. What about advertising in some magazines (*Runner's World*) but not in others (*Cigar Aficionado*)? What about having a discount arrangement with a health club? Putting offices in affluent suburbs will attract a healthier clientele than putting them in working-class areas. Allowing access to fewer doctors in

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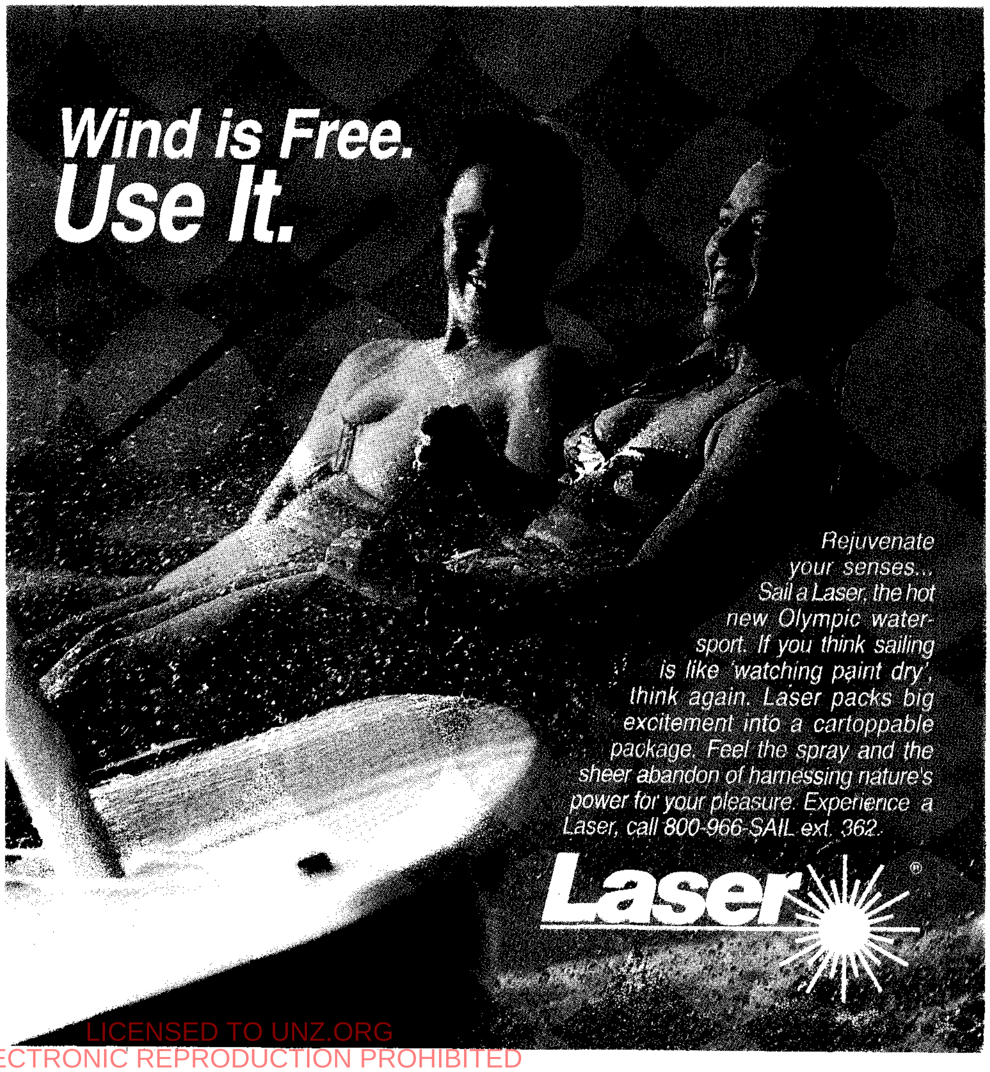

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Even if insurers play it perfectly straight, customers, by their choices, will see to it that bad risks don't spread themselves evenly among insurers. Sicker people will naturally gravitate to the more elaborate plans (offering more choice of doctors, smaller deductibles, and so on), and, with a disproportionate share of the more expensive customers, these plans will have to charge more. Other plans, with a disproportionately healthy customer base, will be able to charge less. This disparity will undermine a primary objective of insurance reform, which is to allow bad risks to buy insurance at nondiscriminatory rates.

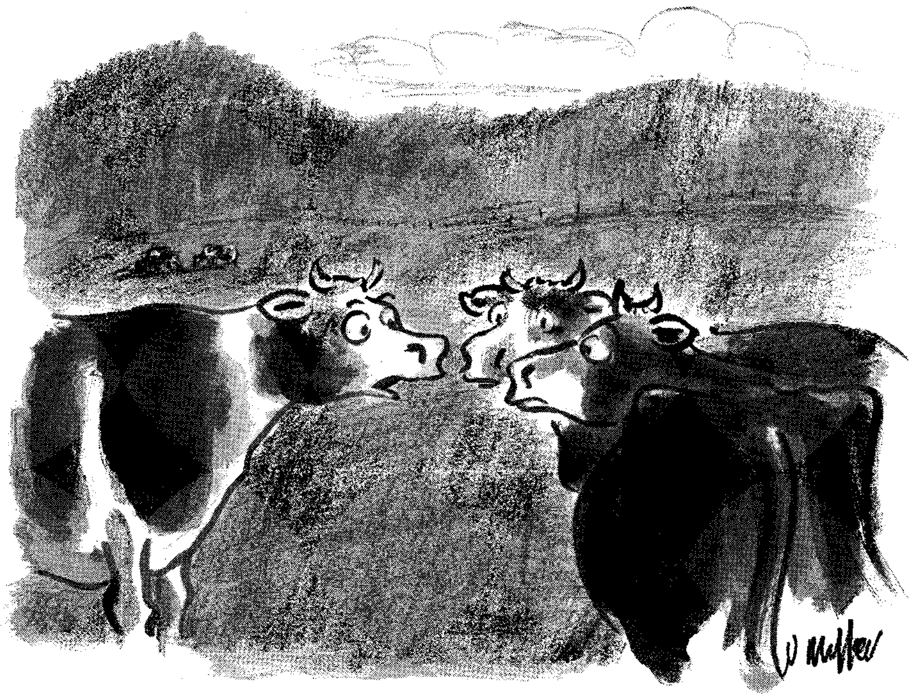
You will soon get what health economists call a "death spiral." As the gap between the prices of different plans grows, the process will feed on itself. Good risks will be less and less willing to pay an ever larger premium for the fancier plans. Ultimately, the fancier plans will become unsustainable. This will defeat the main purpose of those who favor insurance reform as an alternative to government-imposed, one-size-fits-all health care. Little variety will be left.

And, even if you could somehow prevent people from "gaming" the system this way, you couldn't prevent them from leaving the system. Some healthy people would decide to go without health insurance rather than share expenses with Uwe Reinhardt's hundred-thousand-dollar patient. Thus insurance reform could lead to *more* people being uninsured: hardly the idea. And when more healthy people go uninsured you get a second "death spiral." Rates for those who remain insured will go up; the higher rates will lead more people to drop their insurance; the lower number of customers will lead to yet higher rates; and so on.

That is why insurance reform probably won't work without mandated coverage of some sort. Yet it is precisely those conservatives who cherish the conceit that insurance reform can solve everything who object to mandates.

EVEN if everybody is in the system, and even if gaming by insurers and customers is held to a minimum, different insurers will end up with radically different collections of customers. To redress this unfairness (remember, these companies are under government orders to take all comers at nondiscriminatory rates), and to discourage the companies from discriminating on the sly, any serious insurance-reform plan must have a device for redistributing money among the insurance companies. Such distribution is called "risk adjustment."

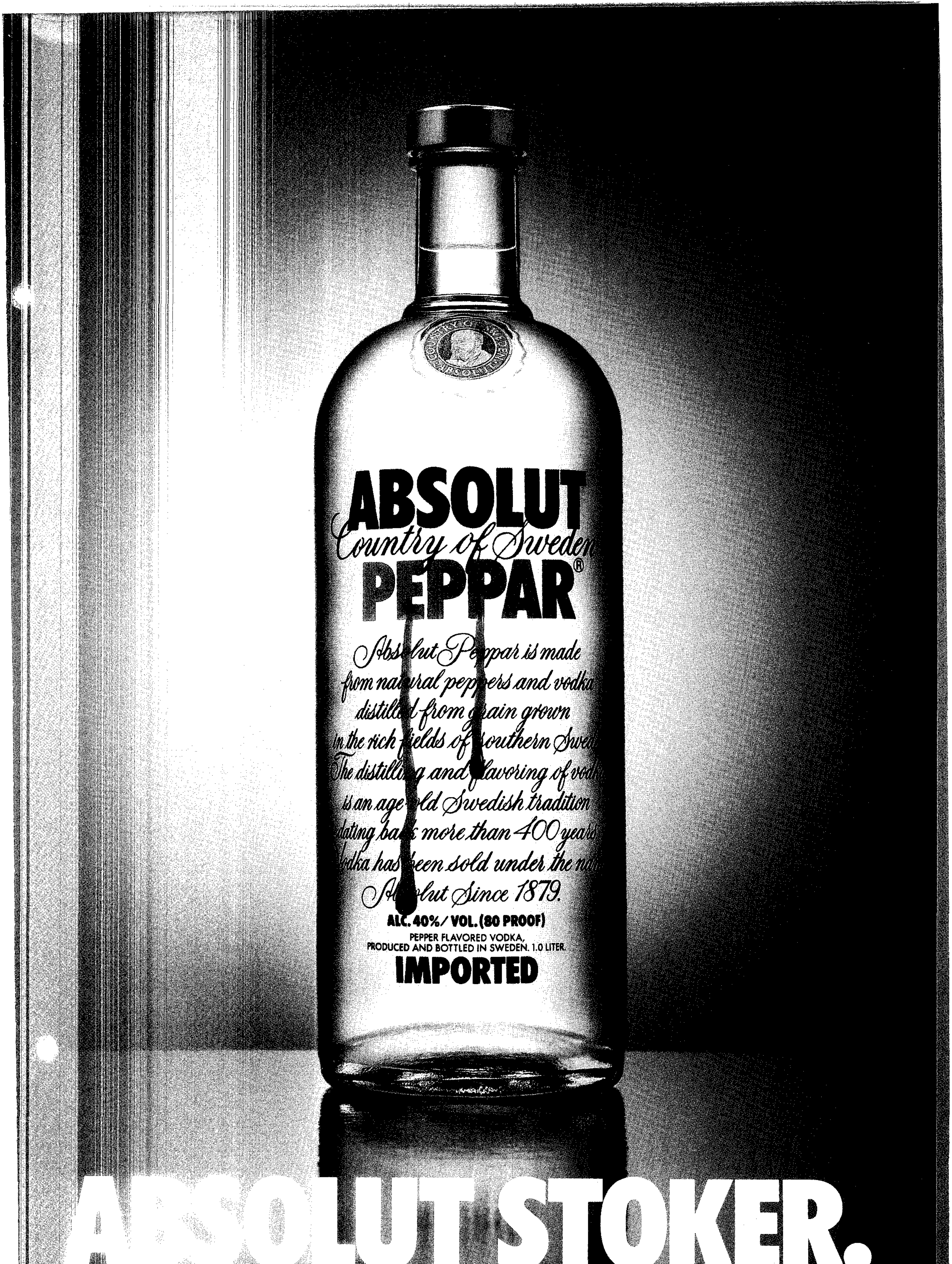
Risk adjustment creates its own conundrums. Should it be done prospectively or retrospectively? That is, do you estimate insurance companies' costs according to the characteristics of their customers and redistribute money among the companies on that basis? Or do you wait and see how much money different insurers have actually had to spend, and then even things out? Newhouse, the Harvard economist, says that the science of prospective risk estimation is just too primitive to have much effect on the companies' incentive to discriminate in signing up customers. But if you redistribute retrospectively, according to what the companies actually spent, you are eliminating the whole point of private insurance. What incentive would companies have to control costs, if the government were going to step in and even out expenses between those who spent more and those who spent less? As the Cato Institute, a free-market think tank, put it in a recent broadside, retrospective risk adjustment "would ultimately eliminate the risk-bearing role of private insurers and create the functional equivalent of a single-payer health system." In other words, in our earnest effort to avoid "socialized medicine" we may have once again reinvented it.



"Have you heard the news? Ben & Jerry's is turning pro."

Clinton's much derided "health-care alliances" were, among other things, an attempt to avoid some of the inherent complications of insurance reform by putting people into large pools, which would allow for the necessary cross-subsidies and risk adjustments—socialization, call it—automatically, without a lot of regulations. The argument was that the alliances would mean less bureaucracy, not more. But the Clintonites were demagogued to death by the very folks who say that "simple" insurance reform is the answer.

A NICE question is why we want to socialize health-care costs when we don't socialize anything else in our society. It's odd, when you think about it. One of the basic principles behind insurance reform holds not merely that the poor should be covered somehow but that everyone should pay the same for coverage, regardless of need. If Bill Gates gets cancer, a working-class family should be expected to share the financial burden equally with him. And vice versa, of course. But, mean-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while, Bill Gates is not expected to share equally with that family the financial burdens imposed on it by the myriad other workings of fate. Why the difference?

This question does not trouble the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank that favors modified community rating. A recent Heritage tract made the case as eloquently as one could wish:

> A lawmaker voting for risk-based insurance would have to tell a constituent with cancer contracted through no fault of his own, or a mother who contracted AIDS because of a blood transfusion after childbirth, or even an individual with a family history of cancer that if they wanted to buy insurance they would face significantly higher premiums than individuals not posing such a risk. Similarly, lawmakers would have to tell a young constituent with a chronic heart condition that paying a lot more for health insurance than her peers is just part of life; and they would have to warn all their constituents that as health insurance companies refine their techniques for calculating risk, such as gene analysis, even seemingly healthy people in the future could face high premiums—or be classified as uninsurable—under a pure risk-based system.

It seems obvious, doesn't it? Yet the Cato Institute is clearly correct in maintaining that the thinking reflected in this passage violates the basic precepts of free-market capitalism. Why *shouldn't* a young woman with a heart condition not pay "a lot more for health insurance than her peers"? If most other sorts of misfortune befell her, with equivalent financial cost, the Heritage Foundation would not leap to suggest a government program of redistribution to negate her bad luck. But when it comes to health care the Heritage Foundation stares at its own principles—and blinks. Or at least it posits, correctly, that any conservative politician would blink. Regarding health care, we are all socialists now.

INSURANCE reform, if it proved successful, would solve the problem of those who are without coverage because of bad health or a lost job. But it wouldn't help those who are without coverage because they simply can't afford it. In fact, by raising rates for healthy people, reform would make insurance unaffordable for many who can afford it now. Medicaid already covers the very poor. But health insurance can easily cost five thousand dollars a year for a family of four—a sum that is beyond the reach of many who don't qualify for Medicaid. Clinton's proposed solution was to require all employers to supply health coverage, as most do now. The small-business lobby may well have beaten that one down.

Yet few participants in the health-care debate—and certainly no politicians—have the guts to admit that they're willing to leave the working poor out of the community of health-care socialism. Even those conservatives who ostentatiously oppose a "new entitlement" of "universal health care" generally claim to have some other method of achieving the same result; they don't dare say outright that people who can't afford decent medical care should go without it. Since employer mandates seem to be verboten, that leaves some sort of government subsidy as the only viable alternative.

But government subsidies create their own puzzles, even aside from the obvious one of how to pay for them. The subsidy proposal in Representative Jim Cooper's health-care plan is a typical one. Cooper, a Tennessee Democrat, has been peddling a plan he calls Clinton Lite, which he says has all the nice parts of Clinton's plan while avoiding all the nasty bits. Cooper would have the government pay a hundred per cent of the health costs of families at the poverty line—currently about $14,800 for a family of four—and gradually reduce the subsidy to zero at double the poverty line.

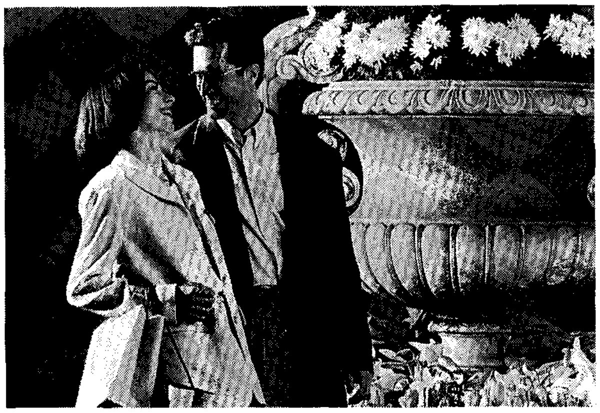
Henry Aaron, a liberal economist at the Brookings Institution, and Martin Feldstein, a conservative economist at Harvard, have both pointed out the devastating flaw in this idea. The gradual phase-out of the subsidy amounts to a stiff marginal tax on earnings within the phase-out range. That is, for every extra dollar of earnings up to almost thirty thousand dollars a year, a family of four would not just pay ordinary taxes but would also lose part of its health-care subsidy. Feldstein calculates that the combined tax rate would be as high as seventy-two per cent. Such a rate would lead many families to conclude that the effort to make additional income (a second job, say, or a stay-at-home spouse's going to work) wouldn't be worth it. The negative impact on total employment and national output would surely be greater than that of Clinton's employer mandates.

Feldstein, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, points out a second flaw. Many of those who, if they were uninsured, would qualify for the Cooper subsidies do have health insurance now, through their employers. The employers would surely be tempted to drop this benefit once the government stood willing to pay for it instead. That means much of the government subsidy would be wasted on people who already have insurance. Feldstein calculates (perhaps a bit tendentiously) that the Cooper subsidy could cost the government six thousand dollars for each currently uninsured individual above the poverty line who is brought into the system, or twenty-four thousand dollars for a family of four.

The Feldstein-Aaron analysis applies not just to the Cooper plan but to any government subsidy of private health care that is phased out as income rises, whether directly or, as some conservatives prefer, through tax credits. The subsidy has to start out large enough, at low incomes, to make health insurance affordable. From that point on, the faster you phase out the subsidy, the higher the effective tax rate becomes. But the slower you phase it out, the greater the cost becomes.

An unheralded advantage of employer mandates is that they would avoid both of the problems created by income-linked government subsidies—nightmarish marginal tax rates and employer shirking. Although it is fair enough to label employer mandates a "tax," at least they are a tax that homes in on the cost of insuring those who aren't insured now.

Of course, neither insurance reform nor subsidies for the poor will do anything to bring health-care costs under control. On cost control, everyone purports to reject the big-government (socialist) solution in favor of a "market-oriented" approach. Clinton contends that his health alliances would promote greater competition in health-care markets, though his plan contains so-called global budgets (limits on total health-care spending), implemented through limits on insurance-rate increases, as backup devices. Jim Cooper's plan is widely praised for using free-



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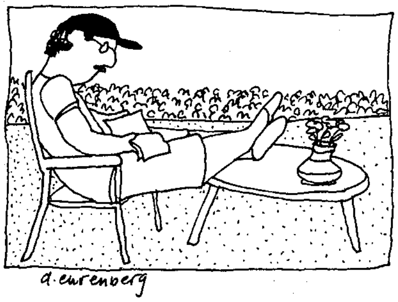

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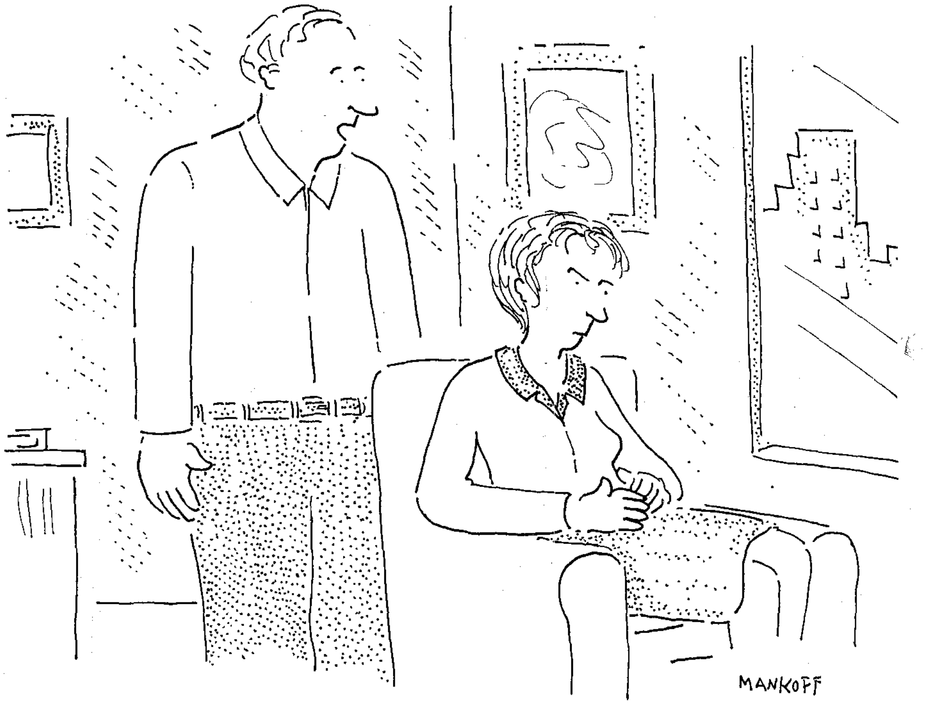

"So, how's your snit coming?"

• •

market competition rather than government controls to restrain prices, but in reality the Cooper plan has hardly any market reform that isn't in the Clinton plan, too. Various conservative and Republican plans either ignore the cost issue or address it through tax changes.

The free market works well enough to hold down costs in other industries—why not in health care? First, because insurance keeps market forces at bay. To the extent that they're insured, people don't mind how much health care they avail themselves of or how much it costs. An experiment conducted by RAND, the research organization, compared, among others, a group of people with insurance coverage of a hundred per cent with a similar group whose insurance had a large annual deductible. The fully insured group spent forty per cent more on health care—no surprise—with no discernible improvement in the health of the average participant. To the extent that the insurance itself is paid for by employers or by a government program like Medicare, individuals are doubly isolated from the cost of their health-care decisions.

But even if every individual paid every single health-care expense out of his or her own pocket, the free market would not work very well to hold down prices. Most health-care-purchasing decisions are made not by the consumer but by a doctor. The doctor decides that you should take this drug, or see this specialist, or have this operation—and the doctor isn't paying for any of these. When the consumer does decide, it is hard for him or her to decide intelligently. How can I know whether such-and-such a test is really needed, or whether a hundred-dollar allergist isn't just as good as one charging a hundred and fifty dollars? But even an intelligent, informed, and tightfisted consumer will hesitate to vindicate Adam Smith when the subject is health. Who is going to shop around for the best price on chemotherapy, or bargain with a brain surgeon?

Despite these limitations, the free market in health care could be made [illegible] work better than it works now. Ironically, the key would be to discourage the very thing—insurance—most people *think health-care reform ought to promote.* Right now the tax subsidy for health care is perverse. If your employer pays for your insurance, you needn't declare it as income, and your employer can deduct it from taxable earnings. But, if you buy your insurance yourself, your premiums and all out-of-pocket medical expenses are (unless they exceed a significant percentage of your income) paid for in post-tax dollars.

A free-market purist would say that there should be no tax preference for medical costs at all: by favoring medical spending over other forms of consumption, the tax break naturally leads to overspending on health care. No one is that pure. A milder option is to make the tax system neutral between insured and uninsured expenses, and between employer-paid and self-paid insurance premiums, by making them all equally deductible. And, if you're really serious, you ought to consider going further and tilting the incentives against insurance.

From this menu of possibilities, most current reform proposals take the sweets and leave the spinach. Ostensibly free-market Republicans, in particular, are all for making individual insurance premiums and direct health expenses deductible—with the usual fanciful explanations of how the government will finance these gifts. Even more, the Republicans by and large reject any limitations on the deductibility of employer-paid insurance. That, after all, would amount to a tax increase! Representative Cooper's plan has a cap on insurance deductibility. President Clinton's plan has a cap on it, too—but only after ten years. These sort of caps might control costs by discouraging lavish insurance plans; but not by much.

So genuine free-market cost control isn't going to be given a chance, and probably wouldn't work if it were to be. If it did work, it would feature many of the same disadvantages as government-imposed cost controls. More and more Americans would find themselves in health maintenance organizations and other managed-care arrangements. Drug and medical research would decline as the invisible hand of competition ruthlessly sought out and squeezed the generous profit margins that had previously sustained them. There might not be rationing per se, but individuals would regularly forgo necessary treatment to save money. I suspect that after a few years of the rigors of genuine free-market medical care the citizenry would be screaming for genuine socialism.

Meanwhile, back in the real-world health-care-reform debate, we move inexorably toward socialism anyhow, while denying it every step of the way. ♦

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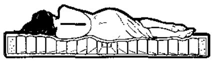

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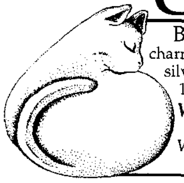

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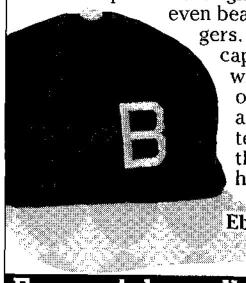


PROFILE

FORTY-ONE FALSE STARTS

How does the painter David Salle know when to stop? How does the author know where to start? It's all a question of process.

BY JANET MALCOLM

THERE are places in New York where the city's anarchic, unaccommodating spirit, its fundamental, irrepressible aimlessness and heedlessness have found especially firm footholds. Certain transfers between subway lines, passageways of almost transcendent sordidness; certain sites of torn-down buildings where parking lots have silently sprung up like fungi; certain intersections created by illogical confluences of streets—these express with particular force the city's penchant for the provisional and its resistance to permanence, order, closure. To get to the painter David Salle's studio, walking west on White Street, you have to traverse one of these disquieting intersections—that of White and Church Streets and an interloping Sixth Avenue—which has created an unpleasantly wide expanse of street to cross, interrupted by a wedge-shaped island on which a commercial plant nursery has taken up forlorn and edgy residence, surrounding itself with a high wire fence and keeping truculently irregular hours. Other businesses that have arisen around the intersection—the seamy Baby Doll Lounge, with its sign offering "Go-Go Girls"; the elegant Ristorante Arquá; the nameless grocery and Lotto center; the dour Kinney parking lot—have a similar atmosphere of insularity and transience. Nothing connects with anything else, and everything looks as if it might disappear overnight. The corner feels like a no man's land and—if one happens to be thinking about David Salle—looks like one of his paintings.

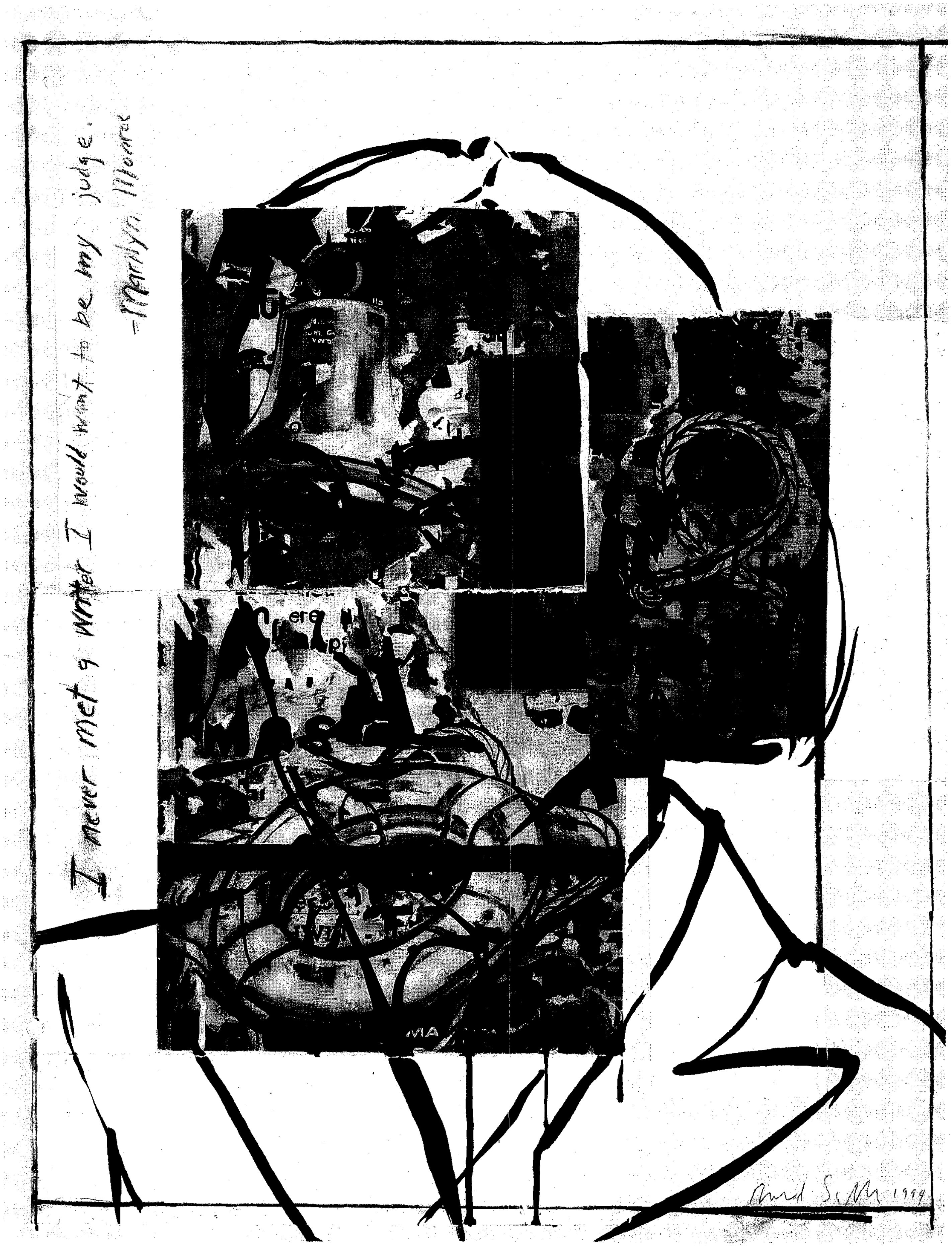
Salle's studio, on the second floor of a five-story loft building, is a long room lit with bright, cold overhead light. It is not a beautiful studio. Like the streets outside, it gives no quarter to the visitor in search of the picturesque. It doesn't even have a chair for the visitor to sit in, unless you count a backless, half-broken metal swivel chair Salle will offer with a murmur of inattentive apology. Upstairs, in his living quarters, it is another story. But down here everything has to do with work and with being alone.

A disorderly profusion of printed pictorial matter covers the surfaces of tables in the middle of the room: art books, art journals, catalogues, brochures mingle with loose illustrations, photographs, odd pictures ripped from magazines. Scanning these complicated surfaces, the visitor feels something of the sense of rebuff he feels when looking at Salle's paintings, a sense that this is all somehow none of one's business. Here lie the sources of Salle's postmodern art of "borrowed" or "quoted" images—the reproductions of famous old and modern paintings, the advertisements, the comics, the photographs of nude or half-undressed women, the fabric and furniture designs that he copies and puts into his paintings—but one's impulse, as when coming into a room of Salle's paintings, is to politely look away. Salle's hermeticism, the private, almost secretive nature of his interests and tastes and intentions, is a signature of his work. Glancing at the papers he has made no effort to conceal gives one the odd feeling of having broken into a locked desk drawer.

On the walls of the studio are five or six canvases, on which Salle works simultaneously. In the winter of 1992, when I began visiting him in his studio, he was completing a group of paintings for a show in Paris in April. The paintings had a dense, turgid character. Silk-screen excerpts from Indian architectural ornament, chair designs, and photographic images of a woman wrapped in cloth were overlaid with drawings of some of the forms in Duchamp's "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even," rendered in slashing, ungainly brushstrokes, together with images of coils of rope, pieces of fruit, and eyes. Salle's earlier work had been marked by a kind of spaciousness, sometimes an emptiness, such as Surrealist works are prone to. But here everything was condensed, impacted, mired. The paintings were like an ugly mood. Salle himself, a slight, handsome man with shoulder-length dark hair, which he wears severely tied back, like a matador, was feeling bloody-minded. He was going to be forty the following September. He had broken up with his girlfriend, the choreographer and dancer Karole Armitage. His moment was passing. Younger painters were receiving attention. He was being passed over. But he was also being attacked. He was not looking forward to the Paris show. He hated Paris, with its "heavily subsidized aestheticism." He disliked his French dealer. . . .

2

IN a 1991 interview with the screenwriter Becky Johnston, during a discussion of what Johnston impatiently called "this whole Neo-Expressionist Zeitgeist Postmodernist Whatever-you-want-to-call-it Movement" and its habit of "constantly looking backward and reworking or recontextualizing art history," the painter David Salle said, with disarming frankness, "You mustn't underestimate the extent to which all this was a process of educating ourselves. Our generation was pathetically educated, just pathetic beyond imagination. I was better educated than many. Julian"—the painter Julian Schnabel—"was totally unedu-


I never met a Writer I would want to be my judge.
–Marilyn Monroe
David Salle 1994

Self-portrait by David Salle, 1994.

cated. But I wasn't much better, frankly. We had to educate ourselves in a hundred different ways. Because if you had been hanging around the Conceptual artists all you learned about was the Frankfurt School. It was as if nothing existed before or after. So part of it was the pledge of self-education—you know, going to Venice, looking at great paintings, looking at great architecture, looking at great furniture—and having very early the opportunity to kind of buy stuff. That's a form of self-education. It's not just about acquisition. It was a tremendous explosion of information and knowledge."

To kind of buy stuff. What is the difference between buying stuff and kind of buying it? Is "kind of buying" buying with a bad conscience, buying with the ghost of the Frankfurt School grimly looking over your shoulder and smiting its forehead as it sees the money actually leave your hand? This ghost, or some relative of it, has hung over all the artists who, like Salle, made an enormous amount of money in the eighties, when they were still in their twenties or barely into their thirties. In the common perception, there is something unseemly about young people getting rich. Getting rich is supposed to be the reward for hard work, preferably arriving when you are too old to enjoy it. And the spectacle of young millionaires who made their bundle not from business or crime but from avant-garde art is particularly offensive. The avant-garde is supposed to be the conscience of the culture, not its id.

3

All during my encounter with the artist David Salle—he and I met for interviews in his studio, on White Street, over a period of two years—I was acutely conscious of his money. Even when I got to know him and like him, I couldn't dispel the disapproving, lefty, puritanical feeling that would somehow be triggered each time we met, whether it was by the sight of the assistant sitting at a sort of hair-salon receptionist's station outside the studio door; or by the expensive furniture of a fifties corporate style in the upstairs loft, where he lives; or by the mineral water he would bring out during our talks and pour into white paper cups, which promptly lost their takeout-counter humbleness and assumed the hauteur of the objects in the Design Collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

Salle was one of the fortunate art stars of the eighties—young men and women plucked from semi-poverty and transformed into millionaires by genies disguised as art dealers. The idea of a rich avant-garde has never sat well with members of my generation. Serious artists, as we know them or like to think of them, are people who get by but do not have a lot of money. They live with second or third wives or husbands and with children from the various marriages, and they go to Cape Cod in the summer. Their apartments are filled with faded Persian carpets and cat-clawed sofas and beautiful and odd objects bought before anyone else saw their beauty. Salle's loft was designed by an architect. Everything in it is sleek, cold, expensive, unused. A slight sense of quotation mark hovers in the air, but it is very slight—it may not even be there—and it doesn't dispel the atmosphere of dead-serious connoisseurship by which the room is dominated.

4

During one of my visits to the studio of the artist David Salle, he told me that he never revises. Every brushstroke is irrevocable. He doesn't correct or repaint, ever. He works under the dire conditions of performance. Everything counts, nothing may be taken back, everything must always go relentlessly forward, and a mistake may be fatal. One day, he showed me a sort of murdered painting. He had worked on it a little too long, taken a misstep, killed it.

5

The artist David Salle and I are sitting at a round table in my apartment. He is a slight, handsome man of thirty-nine, with dark shoulder-length hair, worn tightly sleeked back and bound with a rubber band, accentuating his appearance of quickness and lightness, of being sort of streamlined. He wears elegant, beautifully polished shoes and speaks in a low, cultivated voice. His accent has no trace of the Midwest, where he grew up, the son of second-generation Russian Jewish parents. It has no affectation, either. He is agreeable, ironic, a little detached. "I can't remember what we talked about last time," he says. "I have no memory. I remember making the usual artist's complaints about critics, and then saying, 'Well, that's terribly boring, we don't want to be stuck talking about that'—and then talking about that. I had a kind of bad feeling about it afterward. I felt inadequate."

6

The artist David Salle and I met for the first time in the fall of 1991. A few months earlier, we had spoken on the telephone about a mystifying proposal of his: that I write the text for a book of reproductions of his paintings, to be published by Rizzoli. When I told him that there must be some mistake, that I was not an art historian or an art critic, and had but the smallest acquaintance with his work, he said no, there wasn't a mistake. He was deliberately looking for someone outside the art world, for an "interesting writer," who would write an unconventional text. As he talked, I found myself reluctant to say no to him then and there, even though I knew I would eventually have to refuse. Something about the man made me say I would think about it. He then said that to acquaint me with his work and with himself he would send some relevant writings. A few days later, a stylish package arrived, preceded by a telephone call from an assistant at Salle's studio to arrange the details of delivery. It contained three or four exhibition catalogues, several critical articles, and various published interviews, together with a long interview that was still in typescript but was bound in a hard black cover. It was by the screenwriter Becky Johnston, who, I later learned, was an "interesting writer" Salle had previously approached to do the Rizzoli book. She had done the interview in preparation for the text but had never written it.

7

David Salle's art has an appearance of mysterious, almost preternatural originality, and yet nothing in it is new; everything has had a previous life elsewhere—in master paintings, advertising art, comics, photographs. Other artists have played the game of appropriation or quotation that Salle plays—Duchamp, Schwitters, Ernst, Picabia, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Johns—but none with such reckless inventiveness. Salle's canvases are like bad parodies of the Freudian unconscious. They are full of images that don't belong together: a woman taking off her clothes, the Spanish Armada, a kitschy fabric design, an eye.

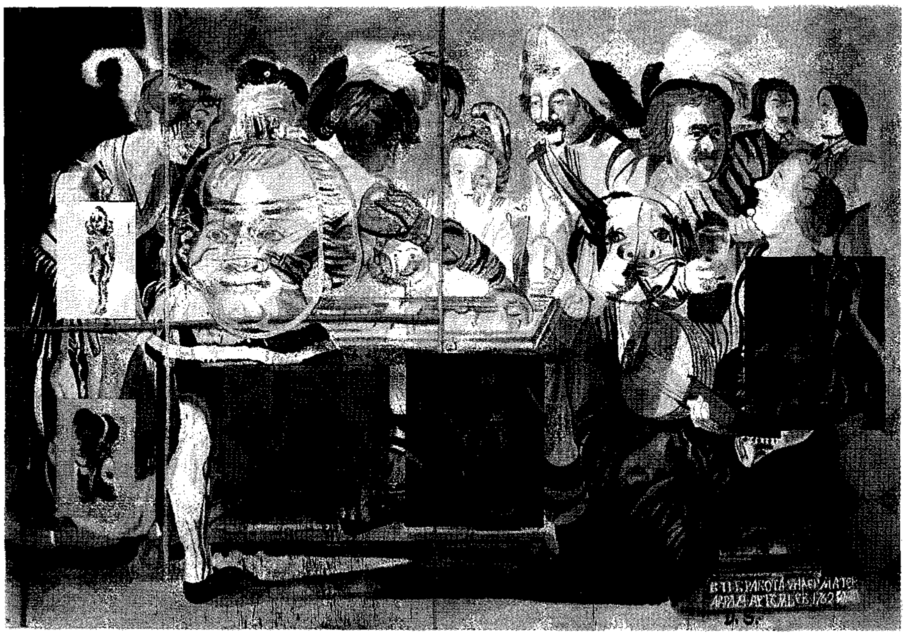
8

DAVID SALLE is recognized as the leading American postmodernist painter. He is the most authoritative exemplar of the movement, which has made a kind of mockery of art history, treating the canon of world art as if it were a gigantic, dog-eared catalogue crammed with tempting buys and equipped with a helpful twenty-four-hour-a-day 800 number. Salle's selections from the catalogue have a brilliant perversity. Nothing has an obvious connection to anything else, and everything glints with irony and a sort of icy melancholy. His jarring juxtapositions of incongruous images and styles point up with special sharpness the paradox on which this art of appropriated matter is poised: its mysterious, almost preternatural appearance of *originality*. After one looks at a painting by Salle, works of normal signature-style art—paintings done in a single style with an intelligible thematic—begin to seem pale and meagre, kind of played out. Paintings like Salle's—the unabashed products of, if not vandalism, a sort of cold-eyed consumerism—are entirely free of any "anxiety of influence." For all their borrowings, they seem unprecedented, like a new drug or a new crime. They are rootless, fatherless and motherless.

9

THE artist David Salle has given so many interviews, has been the subject of so many articles, has become so widely inscribed as an emblematic figure of the eighties art world that it is no longer possible to do a portrait of him simply from life. The heavy shadow of prior encounters with journalists and critics falls over each fresh encounter. Every writer has come too late, no writer escapes the sense of Bloomian belatedness that the figure of Salle evokes. One cannot behave as if one had just met him, and Salle himself behaves like the curator of a sort of museum of himself, helpfully guiding visitors through the exhibition rooms and steering them toward the relevant literature. At the Gagosian Gallery, on Madison Avenue, where he exhibits, there is a two-and-a-half-foot-long file drawer devoted exclusively to published writings about Salle's art and person.

My own encounter with Salle was most heavily shadowed by the interviews he had given two writers, Peter Schjeldahl and Becky Johnston. Reading their dialogues with him was like listening to conversations between brilliant characters in a hastily written but inspired play of advanced ideas and intense, slightly mysterious relationships.



"Tiny in the Air" (1989), one of David Salle's tapestry paintings.

COURTESY OF MARY BOONE GALLERY

10

THE spectre of wrongdoing hovers more luridly over visual art than over literature or music. The forger, the pornographer, and the fraud are stock figures in the allegory that constitutes the popular conception of the art world as a place of exciting evil and cunning. The artist David Salle has the distinction of being associated with all three crimes. His paintings are filled with "borrowed" images (twice he has settled out of court with irked owners); often contain drawings of naked or half-undressed women standing or lying in indecent, if not especially arousing, positions; and have an appearance of messy disjunction that could be dismissed (and has been dismissed by Hilton Kramer, Robert Hughes, and Arthur Danto) as ineptitude palming itself off as advanced art. Most critics, however, have without hesitation accepted Salle's work as advanced art, and some of them—Peter Schjeldahl, Sanford Schwartz, Michael Brenson, Robert Rosenblum, and Lisa Liebmann, for example—have celebrated its transgressive quality and placed his paintings among the works that most authoritatively express our time and are apt to become its permanent monuments.

11

UNLIKE David Salle's enigmatic, difficult art, his life is the banal story of a boy who grew up in Wichita, Kansas, in a poorish Jewish family, took art lessons throughout his childhood, went to art school in California, came to New York, and became rich and famous overnight.

12

DURING an interview with the artist David Salle, published in 1987, the critic and poet Peter Schjeldahl said to him:

> I've noticed, looking at your work attentively for six years or so, a repeating phenomenon, that of going away from seeing your things extremely stimulated and with vivid memories, and thought processes that seem to continue on their own, but eventually they get attenuated and fall apart, leav-

> ing a rather sour residue. If I haven't seen something by you for a while, I can start to think that I'm overliking it. . . . Then, when I see something new, something good by you, there is an immediate freshening, an immediate dropping away of that mood of depression.

I recognize in Schjeldahl's feelings about Salle's work an echo of my own feelings about Salle the man. When I haven't seen him for several weeks or months, I begin to sour on him, to think I'm overliking him. Then I see him again, and I experience Schjeldahl's "immediate freshening." As I write about him now—I haven't seen him for a month—I feel the return of the antagonism, the sense of sourness. Like the harsh marks Salle makes over the softer images he first applies to his canvas, they threaten to efface the benign, admiring feelings of the interviews.

13

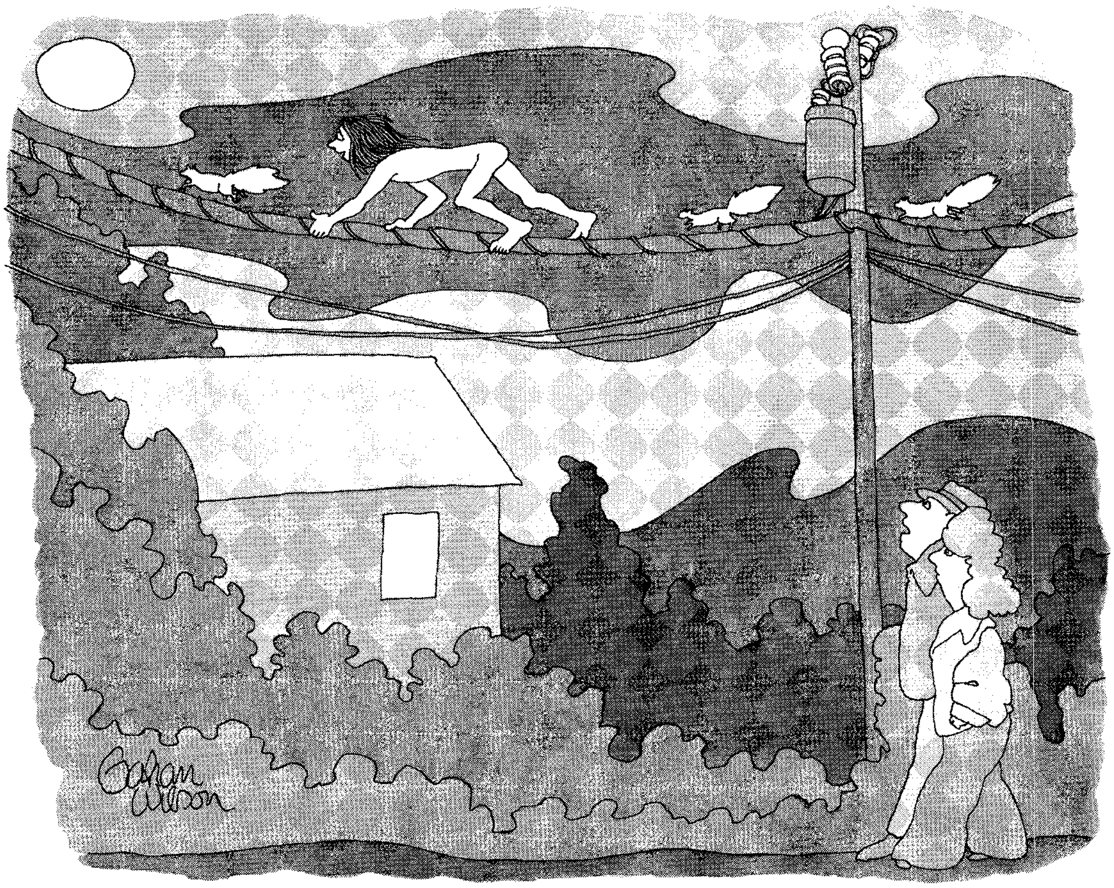
IT is rare to read anything about the artist David Salle in which some allusion isn't made to the question of whether his work is pornographic and whether his depictions of women are humiliating and degrading. Images of women with panties down around their ankles who are pulling blouses over their heads, or women standing bent over with outthrust naked buttocks, or women lying naked on tables with their legs spread recur in Salle's paintings and have become a kind of signature of his work. The images are monochrome—they are copied from black-and-white photographs—and the pudenda are usually so heavily shaded as to foreclose prurience. To anyone who has seen any of the unambiguously dirty pictures of art history—Courbet's "The Origin of the World," say, or Balthus's "The Guitar Lesson"—the idea of Salle as a pornographer is laughable. However, the poses of Salle's women are unsettling. Someone has stage-directed them—someone with a very cold eye and with definite and perhaps rather unpleasant ideas, someone who could well be taking photographs for a girlie magazine, maybe a German girlie magazine. As it happens, some of Salle's images of women are, in fact, derived from the files of an American girlie magazine called *Stag*, for which he briefly worked, in the art department (the magazine was on the verge of folding when he left, and he helped himself to cartons of photographs, mostly of women but also of car and airplane crashes); others are copied from photographs he took himself of hired models.

14

IN a review of a show of David Salle's paintings, drawings, and watercolors at the Menil Collection, in Houston, in 1988, Elizabeth McBride wrote, "He indulges himself in degrading, depersonalizing, fetishistic images of women which constitute . . . a form of obscenity. . . . Paintings such as these are a way of giving permission for degrading actions. This work has all the cold beauty and the immorally functional power of a Nazi insignia." Of the same show Susan Chadwick wrote, "Salle's work . . . is even more mean-spirited, more contemptuous, and more profoundly misogynist than I had realized. . . . That brings us to the difficult question concerning art that is socially bad. Art that presents a message which is in some way wrong, bad, evil, corrupting, immoral, inhumane, destructive, or sick. What can be done about negative artists? I cringe when I see parents bringing their young children through this show at the Menil on weekends."

15

IN the winter of 1992, I began a series of interviews with the artist David Salle. They were like sittings for a portrait with a very practiced sitter. Salle has given many—dozens of—interviews. He is a kind of interview addict. But he is remarkably free of the soul-sickness that afflicts so many celebrities, who grow overly interested in



"They say he was abandoned by summer people and raised by squirrels."

the persona bestowed on them by journalism. Salle cultivates the public persona, but with the detachment of someone working in someone else's garden. He gives good value—journalists come away satisfied—but he does not give himself away. He never forgets, and never lets the interviewer forget, that his real self and his real life are simply not on offer. What is on offer is a construct, a character who has evolved and is still evolving from Salle's ongoing encounters with writers. For Salle (who has experimented with sculpture, video, and film) the interview is another medium in which to (playfully) work. It has its careerist dimension, but he also does it for the sport. He once told me that he never makes any preparatory drawings for or revises anything in his paintings. Every stroke of the brush is irrevocable; nothing can be changed or retracted. A few false moves and the painting is ruined, unsalvageable. The same sense of tense improvisation pervades Salle's answers to interviewers' questions. He looks ahead to the way his words will read in print and chooses them with a kind of fearless carefulness. He also once told me of how he often gets lost as he paints: "I have to get lost so I can invent some way out." In his interviews, similarly, moments of at-a-lossness become the fulcrum for flights of verbal invention. Sometimes it almost seems as if he were provoking the interviewer to put him on the spot, so that he can display his ingenuity in getting off it.

"Smoking or nonsmoking?"

• •

16

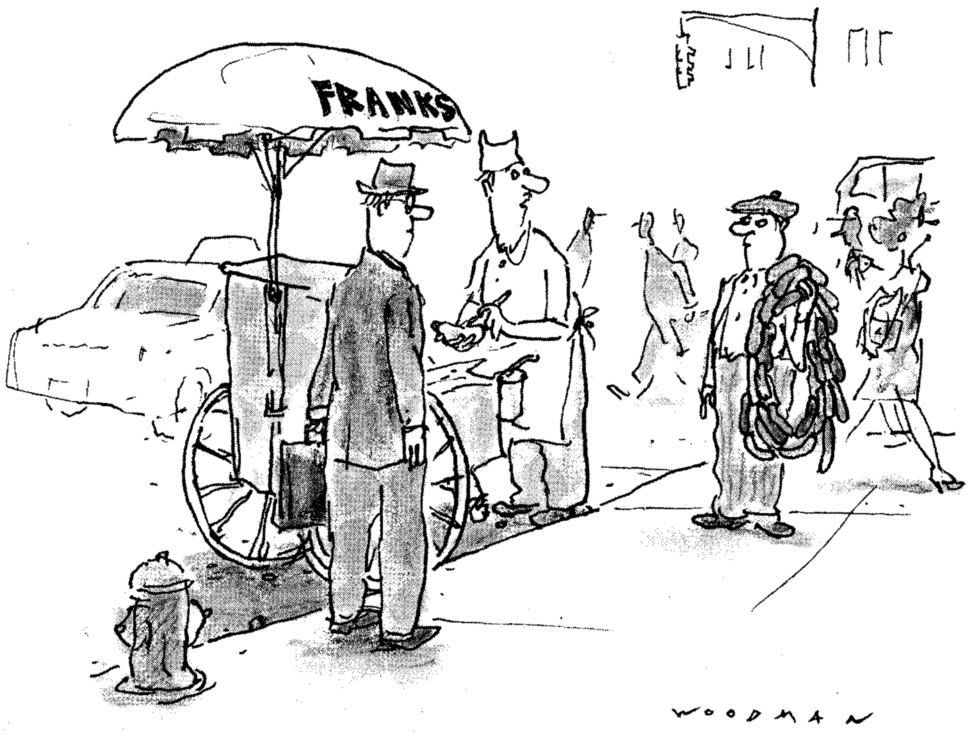
DURING recent talks I had with the painter David Salle, who was one of the brightest art stars of the eighties, he would tell me—sometimes in actual words, sometimes by implication—that the subject of his declining reputation in the art world was of no real interest to him. That this was not where his real life lay but was just something to talk about with an interviewer.

17

WRITERS have traditionally come to painters' ateliers in search of aesthetic succor. To the writer, the painter is a fortunate alter ego, an embodiment of the sensuality and exteriority that he has abjured to pursue his invisible, odorless calling. The writer comes to the places where traces of making can actually be seen and smelled and touched expecting to be inspired and enabled, possibly even cured. While I was interviewing the artist David Salle, I was coincidentally writing a book that was giving me trouble, and although I cannot pin it down exactly (and would not want to), I know that after each talk with Salle in his studio something clarifying and bracing did filter down to my enterprise. He was a good influence. But he was also a dauntingly productive artist, and one day, as I walked into the studio and caught a glimpse of his new work, I blurted out my envious feelings. In the month since we last met, he had produced four large, complex new paintings, which hung on the walls in galling aplomb—while I had written maybe ten pages I wasn't sure I would keep. To my surprise, instead of uttering a modest disclaimer or reassuring words about the difference between writing and painting, Salle flushed and became defensive. He spoke as if I were accusing him, rather than myself, of artistic insufficiency; it appears that his productivity is a sensitive subject. His detractors point to his large output as another sign of his lightweightness. "They hold it up as further evidence that the work is glib and superficial," Salle said.

"If work comes easily, it is suspect."

"But it *doesn't* come easily. I find it extremely difficult. I feel like I'm beating my head against a brick wall, to use an image that my father would use. When I work, I feel that I'm doing everything wrong. I feel that it can't be this hard for other people. I feel that everyone else has figured out a way to do it that allows him an effortless, charmed ride through life, while I have to stay in this horrible pit of a room, suffering. That's how it feels to me. And yet I know that's not the way it appears to others. Once, at an opening, an English critic came up to me and asked me how long I had worked on



"I'm pretty well stocked, but you can leave me your card if you like."

• •

the five or six paintings I was showing. I told her, and she said, 'Oh, so fast! You work so fast.' She was a representative of the new, politically correct, anti-pleasure school of art people. I could easily visualize her as a dominatrix. There was some weird sexual energy there, unexpressed. I immediately became defensive."

"I just realized something," I said. "Everyone who writes or paints or performs is defensive about everything. I'm defensive about not working fast *enough*."

In a comradely spirit, Salle later showed me a painting that had failed. It was a painting he had dwelled on a little too long, had taken a fatal misstep with, and had spoiled. I was shocked when I saw it. I had seen it in its youth and bloom a few months earlier; it had shown a ballet couple in a stylized pose radiantly smiling at each other, a mordant parody of a certain kind of dance photography popular in the nineteen-fifties. (Its source was a photograph in a fifties French dance magazine.) Now the man's face was obliterated. It looked as if someone had angrily thrown a can of gray paint at it. "It's a reject, a failed painting. It's going to be cut up," Salle said, as if speaking of a lamed horse that was going to be taken out and shot.

"It was so fine when I saw it first."

"It wasn't fine. It never worked. It's so bad. It's so much worse than I remembered. It's one of the worst things I've done in years. The image of the couple is so abrasive, so aggressive. I tried to undercut it by painting out the man's face. It was even more obnoxious than hers. But when I did that I was on a course of destruction."

18

THE painter David Salle, like his art, which refuses to narrate, even though it is full of images, declines to tell a story about himself, even though he makes himself endlessly available for interviews and talks as articulately as any subject has ever talked. Salle has spoken with a kind of rueful sympathy of the people who look at his art of fragmentary, incongruous images and say it is too complicated, too much trouble to figure out, and turn away. He, of all people, should know what they are feeling, since his work, and perhaps his life as well, is about turning away. Nothing is ever resolved by Salle, nothing adds up, nothing goes anywhere, everything stops and peters out.

19

ON an afternoon in April, 1992, the painter David Salle and I sat on a pristine yellow fifties corporate-style sofa in his loft, on White Street, looking at a large horizontal painting that was hanging there, a work he had kept for himself from a group of what he calls "the tapestry paintings," done between 1988 and 1991. The painting made me smile. It showed a group of figures from old art—the men in doublets and in hats with plumes, the women in gowns and wearing feathers in their hair—arranged around a gaming table, the scene obviously derived from one of de La Tour's tense dramas of dupery: and yet not de La Tour, exactly, but a sardonic pastiche of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch and Italian genre styles. In the gesture for which Salle is known, he had superimposed on the scene incongruous-seeming fragments: two dark monochrome images of bare-breasted women holding wooden anatomy dolls, a sketchily rendered drawing of a Giacometti sculpture, a drawing of a grimacing face, and a sort of Abstract Expressionist rectangle of gray paint with drips and spatters obliterating a man's leg. As if participating in the joke of their transplantation from Baroque to postmodernist art, the costumed men and women had set their faces in comically rigid, exaggerated expressions. When I asked Salle what paintings he had had in mind when he made his pastiche, he gave me an answer that surprised me—and then didn't surprise me. One of the conditions of Salle's art is that nothing in it be original; everything must come from previously made work, so even a pastiche would have to be a pastiche done by someone else. In this case, it was an anonymous Russian tapestry-maker, whose work Salle had found reproduced in a magazine and had copied onto his canvas. The tapestry paintings, perhaps more richly and vividly than any of Salle's other groups of work, illustrate the paradox on which his art is poised—that an appearance of originality may be achieved through dumb copying of the work of others. Salle has been accused of all kinds of bad things by his detractors (Hilton Kramer, Robert Hughes, and Arthur Danto, the most prominent of the critics who hate his work, have all said that he can't draw), but no one has ever accused him—no one can accuse him—of being derivative. His work has always looked like new art and, as time goes on and his technique and certain of his recurrent images have grown familiar, like art by David Salle. The tapestry paintings—there are more than ten of them—were a culmination. They have an energy, an invention, a kind of gorgeousness, and an atmosphere of success, of having pulled something off against heavy odds, that set them apart from Salle's other works. It is no wonder that he wanted to keep a memento of his achievement.

But now the achievement only seemed to fuel Salle's bitterness, his sense of himself as "someone who is no longer current," who is "irrelevant after having been relevant." He looked away from the painting and said, "The younger artists want to kill you off. They just want to get rid of you. You're in their way. I haven't been the artist who is on young artists' minds for a long time. It has been six or seven years since I was the artist who was on young artists' minds. That's how fast it moves. The artists young artists have on their minds are people I've barely heard of. I'm sure there are young artists who think I'm dead." I laughed, and he joined me. Then, his bitterness returning, Salle said, "I feel that I've just gotten started, marshalled my forces, done the research, and learned enough about painting to do something interesting. What I do used to matter to others—for reasons that may not have had anything to do with its merit. But now, when I feel I have something to say, no one wants to hear it. There has always been antagonism to my work, but the sense of irritation and annoyance has stepped up. 'What, *you're* still around?' "

20

In an interview with the screenwriter Becky Johnston, in 1991, the artist David Salle, during a discussion of his childhood, in Wichita, Kansas, gave this answer to a question about his mother:

> You know, I don't really remember her very well. I just remember that she had a lovely gray skirt and a pink blouse with French cuffs and she had her monogram embroidered on the skirt in pink thread. She worked in the dress store [where Salle's father worked as a buyer, window dresser, and advertising-layout man]—she was a saleswoman on the floor—and she dressed very chicly. I remember her then—which was when I was about six—and then I remember her ten or fifteen years later when she worked at night as a cashier in the accounting department of the J. C. Penney store, and she was completely, utterly changed: she wore brown or beige double-knit pants suits. And I honestly don't remember what happened to her in between. I have no images of her in between. In my mind, she just went from being this very chic, very lovely, kind of slightly elevated person, to being this horrible drudge. Then, some years later, she changed back again.

In an interview with me, in 1992, Salle returned to this memory and told me how upset his mother had been when she read a version of it in an essay by Henry Geldzahler, which appeared in the catalogue of Salle's photographs of naked or partly naked women posed in strange positions. "I had been hesitant to send the catalogue to my mother because of the imagery," Salle told me. "It never occurred to me that something in the *text*, which is innocuous, would upset her. But when she called me up she was in tears."

21

In the introduction to a book-length interview with the artist David Salle, published in 1987 by Random House, the critic and poet Peter Schjeldahl writes, "My first reaction on meeting this twenty-seven-year-old phenom was, I'm afraid, a trifle smug. Simply, he was so transparently, wildly ambitious—even by the standards of his generation, whose common style of impatient self-assurance I had begun to recognize—that I almost laughed at him."

22

When I was interviewing the artist David Salle, an acutely intelligent, reserved, and depressed man,

"I'm on videotape since Day One. How about you?"

he would tell me about other interviews he was giving, and once he showed me the transcript of a conversation with Barbaralee Diamonstein (it was to appear in a book of interviews with artists and art-world figures published by Rizzoli), which was marked by a special confrontational quality and an extraordinary air of liveliness. It was as if the interviewer had provoked the artist out of his usual state of skeptical melancholy and propelled him into a younger, less complex, more manic version of himself.

There is a passage, for example, in which Diamonstein confronts Salle with a piece of charged personal history. "From what I have read, you worked as a layout man at what was referred to as a porn magazine. Is that true?" Salle says yes. "How much did it affect your sensibility? I think you should address the issue and get rid of it one way or the other," Diamonstein sternly says. Salle, disconcerted, lamely points out that actually he wasn't a layout man but a paste-up person at the porn magazine. Still floundering, he irrelevantly adds that he and the other young men in the art department were "pretty stoned most of the time." Diamonstein continues to push Salle on the question of what the experience of working at a men's magazine called *Stag* meant to him. "So, did this affect your sensibility by either informing you, giving you a skill? Repelling you, amusing you? Finding it absurd, interesting—how did you react? How did you ever get there in the first place?"

Salle begins to see a way out of the impasse. "A friend of mine worked there," he says. "It was just a job on one level, but 'absurd/interesting' describes it pretty well. Nobody there took it very seriously. It wasn't *shameful*—people who worked there didn't tell their families they did something else. At least, I don't think so. I just remembered there was one guy who worked there because his father worked there—they were both sitting there all day airbrushing tits and ass. Like father, like son, I guess."

Diamonstein meets this with an inspiration of her own. "You could have had a job at *Good Housekeeping*, too," she points out.

"Well, I only worked there for about six months," a momentarily crushed Salle retorts. Then he finds his tone again: "There has been so much made of it. Even though I had no money, I quit as soon as I could. You know, this assumption of *causality* assigned to the artist's life like plot points in a play is really nutty. Do people think I learned about tits and ass working on *Stag* magazine? Do I seem that pathetic?"

23

In an essay published in the *Village Voice* in 1982, the critic Peter Schjeldahl wrote of his initial reaction to the work of David Salle, who was to become "my personal favorite among current younger artists":

> When I first encountered Salle's work, two or three years ago, its vertiginous mix of blatancy ("storytelling" pictures) and elusiveness (the "story" was impossible to figure out) made me a little sick. I was also rattled by the frequent use of pornographically posed female nudes. It now seems to me hardly conceivable that in his determined excavation of the culture's most charged pictorial matter, Salle would not have availed himself of these ritualized vehicles of male fantasy. But it made me so nervous that I rather comically felt a surge of relief when in last year's show Salle presented a male nude. What may have been even more shocking was Salle's cavalierly offhand exploitation of classically modernist pictorial devices, those sacred signs. He was using them like cheap tools, without even the upside-down respect accorded by satirical irony (as in Lichtenstein). I itched to dislike this stuff.
>
> Then it started to get me. It was like a welling, congested, sentimental weepiness without an object, as emotions triggered by images of, say, a depressed-looking girl smoking in bed and some unspecific tragedy in a crowded street sought cathartic resolution, in vain. It was an abstracted sensation of dislocation, yearning, and loss that started resonating with my sense of what both art and life are like here in the late twentieth century. Suddenly Salle's harsh artifice seemed heroic, an earnest of authenticity—without ceasing to seem perverse, against the grain.

24

One day, the artist David Salle and I talked about Thomas Bernhard's novel "The Loser."

"I'm a third of the way through it," I said, "and at first I was excited by it, but now I'm a little bored. I may not finish it."

"It's so beautiful and so pessimistic," Salle said.

"Yes, but it doesn't hold your interest the way a nineteenth-century novel does. I'm never bored when I'm reading George Eliot or Tolstoy."

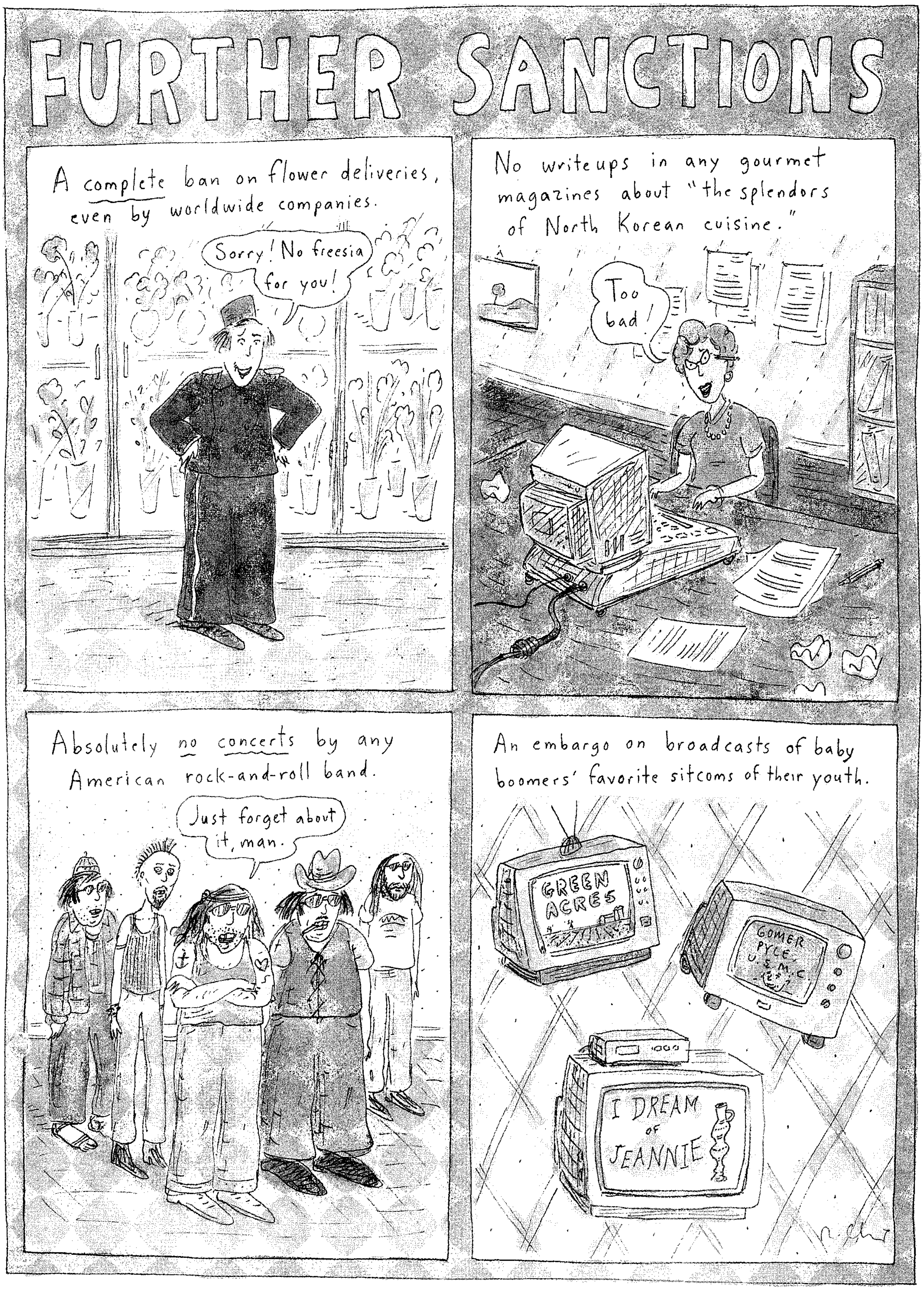
"I am," Salle said.

I looked at him with surprise. "And you're *not* bored when you're reading Bernhard?"

"I'm bored by plot," Salle said. "I'm bored when it's all written out, when there isn't any shorthand."

25

In the fall of 1991, I attended a book party for the writer Harold Brodkey given by the painter David Salle in his loft, in Tribeca. The first thing I saw on walking into the room was Brodkey and Norman Mailer in conversation. As I approached, I heard them jovially talking about the horrible reviews each had just received, like bad boys proudly comparing their poor marks. The party took place early in my acquaintance with Salle, and this fragment of conversation was a sort of overture to talks I later had with him about his sense of himself as a bad boy of art and about his inability to stop picking at the sore of his own bad reviews. He is an artist who believes in the autonomy of art, who sees the universe of art as an alternative to the universe of life, and who despises art that has a social agenda. But he is also someone who is drawn to the world of popular criticism, to the bazaar where paintings and books and performances are crudely and carelessly rated, like horses or slaves, and who wants to be one of the Chosen even as he disdains the choosers; in other words, he is like everybody else. Only the most pathologically pure-hearted writers, artists, and performers are indifferent to how their work is received and judged. But some hang more attentively than others on the words of the judges. During my talks with Salle, he kept returning to the subject of his reception, like an unhappy moth helplessly singeing itself on a light bulb. "I don't know why I keep talking about this," he would say. "This isn't what is on my mind. I don't care that much. I spend a disproportionate amount of time complaining to you about how I am perceived. Every time we finish one of these talks, I have a pang of regret. I feel that all I do is complain about how badly I'm treated, and this is so much not what


FURTHER SANCTIONS
A complete ban on flower deliveries, even by worldwide companies.
Sorry! No freesia for you!
No writeups in any gourmet magazines about "the splendors of North Korean cuisine."
Too bad!
Absolutely no concerts by any American rock-and-roll band.
Just forget about it, man.
An embargo on broadcasts of baby boomers' favorite sitcoms of their youth.
GREEN ACRES
GOMER PYLE U.S.M.C.
I DREAM OF JEANNIE

I want to be talking about. But for some reason I keep talking about it."

26

David Salle is one of the best-received and best-rewarded of the artists who came to prominence in the nineteen-eighties, but he is not one of the happiest. He is a tense, discontented man, with a highly developed sense of irony.

27

In several of David Salle's paintings, a mysterious dark-haired woman appears, raising a half-filled glass to her lips. Her eyes are closed, and she holds the glass in both hands with such gravity and absorption that one can only think she is taking poison or drinking a love potion. She is rendered in stark black-and-white and wears a period costume—a dress with a sort of Renaissance aspect. The woman disturbs and excites us, the way people in dreams do whom we know we know but can never quite identify. David Salle himself has some of the enigmatic vividness of the drinking woman. After many interviews with him, I feel that I only *almost* know him, and that what I write about him will have the vague, vaporous quality that our most indelible dreams take on when we put them into words.

28

One of the leitmotivs of a series of conversations I had in 1992 and 1993 with the painter David Salle was his unhappiness over the current reception of his work. "I don't think anyone has written a whole essay saying my work is passé," he said. "It's more a line here and there. It's part of the general phenomenon called eighties-bashing. The critics who have been negative all along, like Robert Hughes and Hilton Kramer, have simply stepped up their negativity. The virulence of the negativity has grown enormously in the past couple of years. The reviews by Hughes and Kramer of my '91 show were weirdly, personally insulting. The two of them were always negative, but now it was as if they smelled blood and were moving in for the kill."

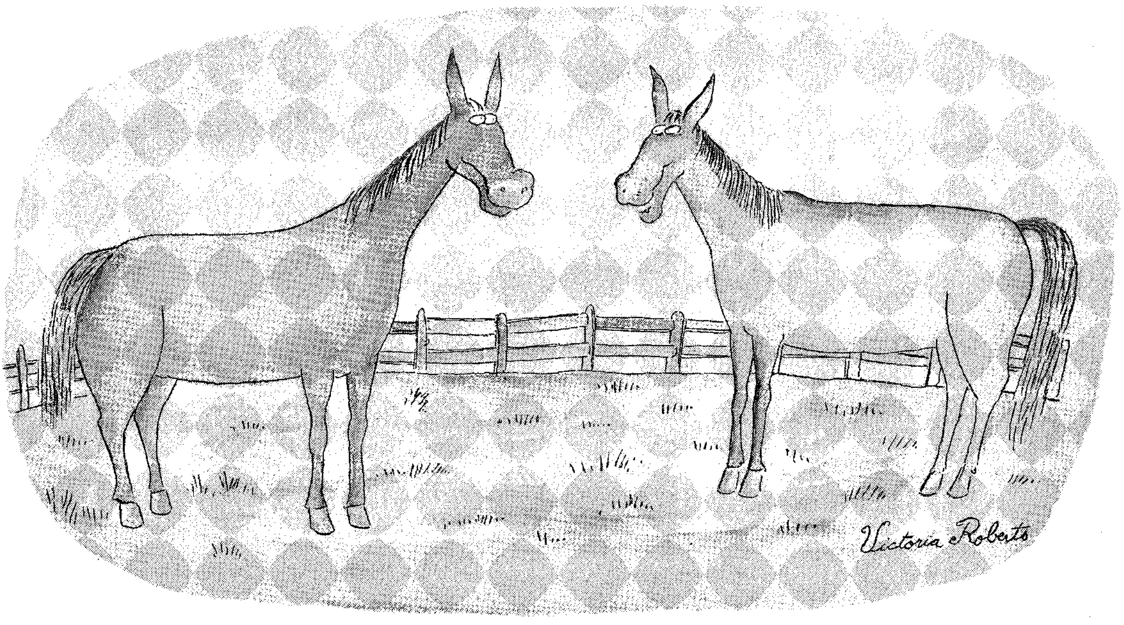
I told Salle I would like to read those reviews, and a few days later his assistant sent them to me. Salle had not exaggerated. Hughes and Kramer seemed beside themselves with dislike and derision; their reviews had an almost hysterical edge. "The exhibition of new paintings by David Salle at the Gagosian Gallery . . . has one tiny merit," Hughes wrote in *Time* on April 29, 1991. "It reminds you how lousy and overpromoted so much 'hot' 'innovative' American art in the 1980's was. If Julian Schnabel is Exhibit A in our national wax museum of recent duds, David Salle is certainly Exhibit B." He went on:

> Yet is there a duller or more formula-ridden artist in America than Salle in 1991 as he approaches the Big Four-Oh? . . . Drawing, as anyone who has seen a few Salles knows, is not what the artist does. He never learned to do it, and probably never will. He is incapable of making an interesting mark. . . . Thus his pictures enable critics to kvetch soulfully about the dissociation of signs and meanings, and to praise what all good little deconstructors would call their "refusal of authoritarian closure," meaning, roughly, that they don't mean anything in particular. It's as though those who bet on him can't bear to face the possibility that his work was vacuous to begin with. . . . The Gagosian Gallery . . . has even hired a guard to stand at the entrance to the room in which Salle's six new paintings are displayed, presumably in case some collector from the bottom of the waiting list is seized by the impulse to grab one of those tallowy objects from the wall and make a run for it. Ten minutes into the show, your heart goes out to that guard. Eight hours a day, five days a week, of this!

Kramer had wrung his hands in the New York *Observer* of April 15th:

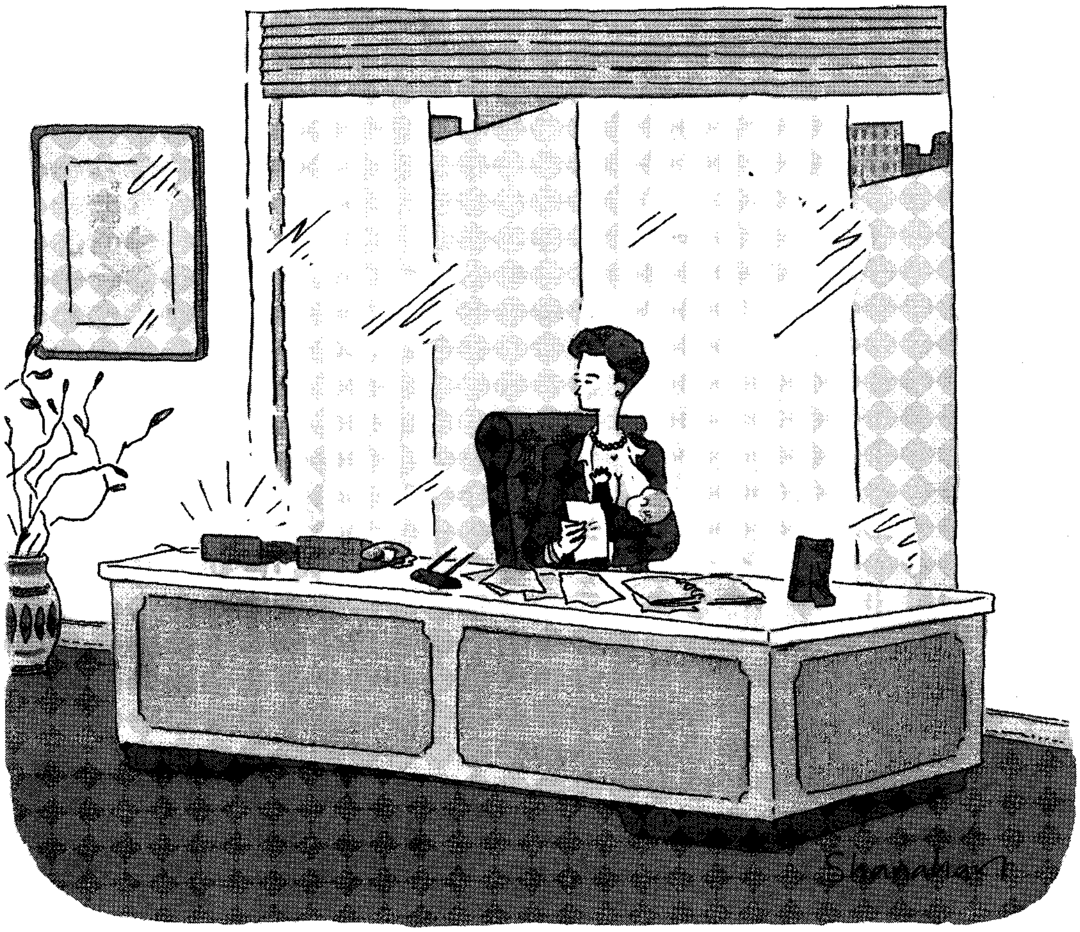
> About some art exhibitions nowadays, we hardly know whether to laugh or cry. Their pretensions, not to mention the atmosphere of piety surrounding them, are undeniably laughable. Yet their artistic realization is at once so barren and so smug—and offers so few of the satisfactions we look to art to bring us—that the sense of comedy they elicit turns, almost before we know it, to feelings of grief and depression. . . .
>
> Consider the David Salle exhibition that is currently occupying the lush precincts of the Gagosian Gallery. . . .
>
> In the 80's, a taste for the raunchy and outrageous functioned in the fashionable art world very much the way junk bonds functioned in the financial markets, and it was no accident that the artists who produced art of this sort often found their most enthusiastic patrons among the collectors who were the principal beneficiaries of such junk-bond enterprises. These collectors often knew very little about the art that had been created in the past—in the days, that is, before they made their first fortunes. For such collectors, art history began the day they first walked into Leo Castelli's or Mary Boone's. In that world, the Old Masters were Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol, and artists like David Salle, who had been nominated to succeed those exalted talents, were guaranteed a sensational success.

The hostility and snobbery of both Hughes and Kramer toward the collectors of Salle's work is worthy



"So then in comes this good-looking French vet from Vétérinaires sans Frontières."

of note. This kind of insult of the consumer has no equivalent in book or theatre or movie reviewing. That is probably because the book/play/film reviewer has some fellow feeling with the buyers of books and theatre and film tickets, whereas the art reviewer usually has no idea what it is like to buy a costly painting or sculpture. He is, per financial force, a mere spectator in the tulipomaniacal drama of the contemporary art market, and he tends to regard the small group of people rich enough to be players as if they were an alien species, quite impervious to his abuse. As for the collectors, they repay the critics for their insults by ignoring their judgments: they go right on buying—or, at any rate, they don't immediately stop buying—the work of artists who get bad reviews. Eventually, critical consensus (the judgments of museum curators form a part of it) is reflected in the market, and in time collectors bow to its will, but at the moment they were not bowing to Hughes's and Kramer's opinions and were continuing to trade in Salles. Salle smarted under the attacks but continued to make money.



"Ten-fifteen, Ms. Whitney. Time to switch breasts."

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29

I ONCE asked the artist David Salle if he had read an article in *The New Republic* by Jed Perl (who also frequently writes for Hilton Kramer's *The New Criterion*) about how the wrong artists are celebrated and how the really good artists are obscure. The article was entitled "The Art Nobody Knows," with the subhead "Where Is the Best American Art to Be Found? Not in the So-Called Art World." It articulated the antagonism of an older generation toward the art stars of the eighties, and complained of the neglect suffered by a group of serious artists, who had been quietly working and, over the years, "making the incremental developments that are what art is all about." The world of these artists, Perl said, was "the real art world," as opposed to the world of Salle and Schnabel and Cindy Sherman. Perl held up two artists—the sculptor Barbara Goodstein and the painter Stanley Lewis, whose work "is rarely seen by anybody beyond a small circle of admirers"—as examples of the neglected "real artist." "What happens to an artist whose development receives so little public recognition?" he asked. "Can artists keep on doing their damnedest when the wide world doesn't give a damn?"

Salle said that he had not read the article and that it sounded interesting. "I have always wanted to know what Jed Perl likes," he said. "Maybe he's right. Maybe these *are* the good artists." He asked me to send him the article, and I did so. The next time we met, he greeted me with it in his hand and an amused look on his face. "What a pity they illustrated it," he said. "Without the illustrations, you might think Perl was onto something. But when you see the work you just have to laugh. It's so *tiny*."

30

I USED to visit the artist David Salle in his studio and try to learn the secret of art from him. What was he doing, in his enigmatic, allusive, aggressive art? What does any artist do when he produces an art work? What are the properties and qualities of authentic art, as opposed to ersatz art? Salle is a contemplative and well-spoken man, and he talked easily and fluently about his work and about art in general, but everything he said only seemed to restate my question. One day, he made a comment on the difference between collages done by amateurs and collages done by artists which caused my ears to prick up. It occurred to me that a negative example—an example of something that wasn't art—could perhaps be instructive. Accordingly, on my next visit with Salle I took with me three collages I had once made for my own pleasure. At the time, Salle was himself making collages, in preparation for a series of paintings featuring images of consumer products of the fifties. He was going to copy his collages in oil paint on large canvases, but they already looked like works of art. "Why are your collages art and mine not?" I asked him.

Salle propped up my collages and regarded them closely. At last, he said, "There's nothing that says your collages aren't art. They're art if you declare them to be so."

"Yes, that's the Duchamp dictum. But I don't declare them to be so. Don't you remember the distinction you drew between collages made by amateurs and collages made by artists?"

"I was speaking generally," Salle said.

I realized that he was being delicate, that he didn't want to voice his true opinion of my collages. I assured him that I hadn't brought the collages to be praised, that I had no investment in them, that I had brought them only in order to engage him in a discussion. "Please say anything that occurs to you."

"Stuff occurs to me, but I don't want to say it. It might sound mean-spirited."

Eventually, Salle conquered enough of his reluctance to make a few mild criticisms of the composition of my collages, and to say that his own collages were composed along simple principles that any art-school freshman would recognize. Looking back on the incident, I see that Salle had also seen what any first-year student of psychology would have seen—that, for all my protests to the contrary, I *had* brought my art to him to be praised. Every amateur harbors the fantasy that his work is only waiting to be discovered and acclaimed; a second fantasy—that the established contemporary artists must (also) be frauds—is a necessary corollary.

31

I ONCE visited the artist David Salle in his studio, on White Street, when he was making preparatory col-

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HISTORY: THE HOME MOVIE

A continuation of the author's novel in verse about two families, the Pasternaks and the Raines. Here the Pasternaks, having fled Russia in 1921, adjust to reality in Germany.

BY CRAIG RAINE

Rosa, Zhonya, and Leonid Pasternak in Germany.

COURTESY OF PASTERNAK ARCHIVE

1924: A SUITCASE FULL OF SHIT

I now possess, he writes,
in forceful Gothic script,
a suitcase full of shit.

Brief, a letter of reproach,
unsigned, to Hjalmar Schacht,
leaving the taste of glue

from fifty milliard marks
of postage stamps. Ten of them.
A little quilt of perforations.

The jaundiced five-watt bulb
dangles like a suicide
at the end of its flex.

Otto Spek, the concierge,
tilts back his head,
producing a paunch

on the neck of his shirt.
He takes a Josephine Baker
and rogers it briskly

with a match in the rear
before lighting up
and suckling the smoke.

His face is like a snap,
viciously torn into five
or six pieces, then glued

together again any old how,
leaving his expressions
hard to determine, but hard,

in the perpetual dusk
of his caretaker's "office,"
a cupboard under the stairs.

Sixty years of cigars
have packed his nose with hair
like a meerschaum pipe.

He sits, stout as a seal,
smoking, watching, weeping,
waiting to pick up her steps

on the entrance-hall stone,
or hear the *clish-clash* of her hand
on the lift's iron trellis.

The foreign Frau. Frau Pasternak.
With whom he has fallen in love.
Whose first name is Rosa.

Who lives on the fifth floor,
with her beautiful daughters
and that arrogant, elegant husband.

He has spent to the thought
of the buttocks under her dress,
their heavy pink, pulled apart,

white and drained, distorted
where his tufted fingers press.
Sturm und Schmalz.

“Frau Pasternak. Frau Pasternak.”
Her umbrella is inside out
like a rhubarb leaf.

“Let me be of assistance.
What a terrible wind.”
He pirouettes the pleats

and orders them one by one
like a cashier at the bank.
Then the black elastic loop.

The ritual reminds him:
“Something. I show you.”
And he drags out a suitcase,

carried away by his own conversation:
“‘You see. Inflation. *Notgeld*, eh?
Emergency money. Inflation.

Just like mental arithmetic. Eh?
If there are 3,884 presses
printing off money 24 hours a day

at 177 separate plants (yes?)
and the inflation is running
at 2000 per cent per day,

how many people are needed?
Answer: 50 per cent to print
what the other 50 have to spend.

Ha ha. Big joke, Frau Pasternak.
Big joke. Something. I show you.
Inflation. A fuck for six eggs.”

Only aware he is urgent,
she fails to understand
even the drift of what he says.

The locks on the suitcase
flip up under his thumbs,
revealing a fortune in notes,

brick after brick after brick,
printed on Bielefeld silk
to the value of billions.

Wertlosgeld. With the one word
each bundle is identically marked.
“Worthless, Frau Pasternak,

and I just can’t throw it away.”
He is crying openly now,
weeping like a wedge of lemon.

“Silk, best silk, Frau Pasternak.
Like ladies’ lingerie,” he chokes,
plunging into the suitcase,

demolished *Notgeld*, brick after brick.
“Top-quality Bielefeld drawers.
From first of December, purely platonic.”

As a spider tiptoes,
quickly she tiptoes away.
Upstairs, she explains to Leonid

that “Spek is having a breakdown.
Ugh. Those beastly sabre scars.
Purple and ridgy. Like worms.”

1924: BERLIN AM ZOO

The low-slung leopard
modelling its expensive coat
for the length of the cage,

the gorilla focussing
his nostrils like binoculars
in their direction,

the Indian elephants
without their dentures,
and Fedya captivated

by his cousin Zhonya,
who cannot make up her mind
to accept or reject

his proposal of marriage.
She is almost in tears.
Marriage seems so intimate.

“Here in Germany, together,
we can make a new life.
All I ask is, think it over.”

In the reptile house,
humidity and a muscular lizard
doing its press-ups,

poised like some Lothario
postponing an orgasm,
flame licking his lips.

“Is it the difference
in age? Does it bother you?”
Fedya finds himself prompted,

conscious of seeing,
fifteen years before her birth,
the Prince of Wales at Marienbad.

She shakes her head.
Brown bewildered eyes
capture his face,

its stereoscopic ugliness:
one hooded eye, the other
clenched like palsy

on its monocle,
toast-crumb mustache
above a muscular mouth.

“Do you find me ugly?”
He is thinking of Marx
on the subject of money,

its galvano-chemical power
to buy into beauty.
“You’d get used to me.”

She cannot explain.
“No. You don’t understand.”
She wants to weep for the animals.

“It isn’t that,” she says.
“I don’t care about looks.
Yours or anyone’s. Let’s have tea.”

Today her period is painful.
The pubic hair is crisp,
a scab of rust, tugged

by the sanitary towel.
Indescribable, the diffidence
she feels, even to herself.

She toys with the tongs,
plays blindman’s buff
with sugar cubes. Love.

Outstretched aluminium
somnambulist arms. Reaching.
She has never been properly kissed.

Loops, elastic, bleeding,
the stretch-marked moirette
of her thighs from the famine.

She keeps the secret of herself,
how it is to be her.
Untouchable untouchable.

“Is it because we’re cousins?”
Yards away, against the bars,
the lolling mongoloid orangutan.

"It's good we're cousins,"
she counters, lifting her cup.
"But if I married you,

I'd be someone else.
A different kind of person."
She means to say

if she were someone else,
she'd marry him. Too late.
She will live with her words.

Like the frozen hunting horn
of Baron Karl Friedrich
Hieronymus von Münchausen

The Pasternaks on holiday in Venice, circa 1912.

thawing out beside the fire,
after an epic silence
she speaks: "So I'd better say yes."

The poor fellow can hardly follow:
"Not unless you love me."
Her answer is incredulous:

"But I've always loved you.
Always. You're my cousin.
I couldn't marry a stranger."

Fedya produces the ring,
a D'Oyley of diamonds
in a platinum setting,

and closes the box
with a cluck
like a dog catching a fly.

Kissed, she is touched
by the taste of somebody else,
someone whose beauty is plain. ♦

lages for a series of paintings based on consumer products, and he told me that he had noticed himself being obsessively drawn to two images: watches and shoes. They had seemed meaningful to him—he had been cutting pictures of watches and shoes out of newspapers and magazines—but he hadn't known why. The meaning of the watches remained obscure, he said, but a few days earlier he had cracked the code of the shoes. "The shoe as presented in the selling position isn't the thing. The thing is underneath the shoe. *It's the idea of being stepped on.*" Salle's sense of himself as being stepped on—by people who are jealous of him, by people who feel superior to him, by people who don't like his sexual politics, by people who find his work too much trouble to decipher—has become a signature of his public persona.

32

THERE is a kind of man who is always touchingly and a little irritatingly mentioning his wife—touchingly because one is moved by the depth of his affection, and irritatingly because one feels put down by the paragon who inspires it. During the two years I interviewed the artist David Salle, he was always mentioning the dancer and choreographer Karole Armitage, with whom he had lived for seven years. Although Salle and Armitage had separated a few months before our talks began, he would speak about her as if he were still under her spell. They had met in 1983, and had become a famous couple. She had been a lead dancer in the Merce Cunningham company, and had then formed her own avant-garde company. Her choreography was a kind of version in dance of what Salle was doing in painting: an unsettling yoking of incongruous elements. (The fusion of classical ballet with punk-rock music was Armitage's initial postmodernist gesture.) That Salle should become her collaborator—painting sets and designing costumes for her ballets—seemed almost inevitable. The first product of the Armitage-Salle collaboration was a ballet called "The Mollino Room," performed at the Metropolitan Opera House in May, 1986, which had been commissioned by American Ballet Theatre, and in which Baryshnikov himself danced. In an article entitled "The Punk Princess and the Postmodern Prince," published in *Art in America*, Jill Johnston wonderfully wrote of the première, "It attracted a capacity audience of art world luminaries and suburban bankers or whoever they were in their tuxedos and jewels and wild satisfied looks of feeling they were at just the right place that opening evening in Manhattan." As events proved, however, the bankers were in the wrong place. The ballet got terrible reviews, as did Armitage's subsequent ballets "The Tarnished Angels" and "The Elizabethan Phrasing of the Late Albert Ayler," both staged at the Brooklyn Academy in 1987. "Little talent, much pretension. Any other comment might seem superfluous," the *Times* dance critic Anna Kisselgoff wrote of Armitage on the latter occasion.

"The dance world is controlled by one person, Anna Kisselgoff," Salle told me bitterly. "She controls it internationally as well as locally. A good review from Anna will get you a season in France, and a bad review will cancel it. Karole was literally run out of town by Anna. She can't work in New York anymore." Armitage now lives and works in Los Angeles and abroad.

Salle and Armitage have remained close friends; they talk frequently on the telephone and meet whenever she comes to New York. Salle speaks of her with a kind of reverence for the rigor and extremity of her avant-gardism. She and her dancers represent to him the purest form of artistic impudence and intransigence. "During the seven years I was with Karole, I lived a different life from that of any artists I know," he told me. "I lived her life. She would probably tell you she lived mine. At any rate, during those years I was more involved with her work than with my own. Her work was about being on the edge, performed by people who enjoyed being on the edge, for an audience who wanted to be on the edge. Her life was much more urgent and alive and crisis-oriented. The performing arts are like that. When I was with Karole, artists seemed boring to me—staid and self-satisfied. Stolid, like rocks in a stream. Very few people had her inquisitiveness and restlessness, her need for stimulation in the deepest sense. When I was with Karole, artists seemed almost bovine to me, domestic, house-oriented, safe."

Salle and I were talking in his sleek, cold, obsessively orderly loft on White Street, furnished with nineteen-fifties corporate-style sofas and chairs, and I asked him if Armitage had helped furnish the place.

"No," he said. "I wasn't with her when I bought the loft. She moved in a few years later. I came to see this place through her eyes. Through her eyes it was intimidating and alienating. There was no place for her in it."

"Was there an area that she took possession of, that became her own domain?"

"No, not really. Because there was no way to divide it. She had a desk—sort of where that painting is. There was a country house in upstate New York. I bought it because she liked it. It was an old house, and she had a romantic feeling about it. But we never had time to go there."

33

IN a long interview with the artist David Salle by the screenwriter Becky Johnston, there is a passage about the painting tradition of the female nude in Western art and about Salle's sense of himself as not belonging to that tradition. "It would be interesting," Johnston says, "to try to point out what is different about your nude women from the parade of nude women which has gone by."

"Well, we both agree there's a difference," Salle says. "It feels like a complete break."

"Absolutely. But I want to know what you think that break is."

Salle struggles to answer and gives up. "I'm not getting anywhere. I know it's different, but I don't know why. I don't know how to express it in words. What do you think?"

Johnston says shrewdly, "I think the difference between the nude woman in your paintings and those in others is that *she's not a woman*. She's a representative of something else. She's a stand-in for your view. I don't think that's true of most of the women in art. And I don't think it's a sexual obsession with women which motivates your use of the nude, as it does, say, Picasso's. It's much deeper, more personal and subjective. That's my opinion."

Salle doesn't protest, and Johnston goes on to ask him, "If you had to describe it—and I know this is asking you to generalize, but feel free to do so wildly—what's 'feminine' to you?"

Salle stops to consider. "I have the feeling that if I were to start talking about what I think is feminine, I would list all the qualities I can think of."

34

DAVID SALLE is a slight, handsome man of forty-one, who wears his dark shoulder-length hair pulled back and bound with a rubber band, though sometimes he will absently pull off the rubber band and let the hair fall around his thin, not always cleanly shaven face. In 1992 and 1993, I would visit him at his studio, and we would talk about his work and his life. I did not find what he said about his work interesting (I have never found anything any artist has said about his work interesting), but when he talked about his life—especially about his life as an unsettling presence in the art world and his chronic feeling of being misunderstood—that was something else. Then his words took on the specificity, vividness, and force that had drained out of them when he talked about art. But even so I felt dissatisfied with the portrait of the artist that was emerging for me—it seemed too static—and one day I said to him, "I keep thinking there should be some action."

"Action?"

"Yes. Something should happen. There has been some action—I've been to your studio and to your loft and to your drawing show and to the dinner afterward—but I want more."

"We'll think of something," Salle said.

"What if I watched you paint?"

"We could try it, though I think it would be pretty boring, like being around a film set. A lot of waiting around." Salle then recalled artists he had seen on TV as a child, who painted and talked to the audience. "My friend Eric Fischl tells me there's a whole raft of them on TV now—wildly entertaining, creepy guys who paint and talk a blue streak. Fischl is an expert on TV painters. He says there's a guy on TV who is the fastest painter in the world. It's a funny thing to think about. Painting, like theatre, is about illusion, and I think it might be shocking to see how undramatic the process is through which the illusions are created."

"We could go to a museum together."

Salle said he had already done that with a journalist—Gerald Marzorati, for an article in *ARTnews*. "We went to the Met. I was badly hung over, and it only magnified the pathetic limitations of what I had to say about other art. We were looking at these Rembrandts, and I didn't have anything to say about them. It came down to 'They sure are good.' "

I never watched Salle paint (his talk about the TV artists somehow took care of that), but I did go to a museum with him once—to the Met, to see the Lucian Freud show. I had had a rather cumbersome journalistic idea. Robert Hughes, who had written scathingly about Salle, had called Freud "the best realist painter alive," and I imagined doing a set piece in which Salle would make acidic comments on a favorite of Hughes's as a sort of indirect revenge. I called up Salle and put the idea to him. Salle said he'd be glad to go to the Freud show, but couldn't oblige me with my set piece, since he didn't hate Freud's work—he admired it, and had even "quoted" from it in his own work. At the show, Salle moved through the rooms very quickly. He could tell at a glance what he wanted to look at and what he didn't, and mostly he didn't. He strode past paintings, only occasionally pausing to stand before one. He lingered appreciatively before a small nude owned by a film actor—"Ah, the Steve Martin," he said when he spotted it—and a large painting of Freud's family and friends in his studio, flanked by a studio sink and a massive scented geranium with many dead leaves. What Salle said about the paintings that captured his interest was technical in character; he spoke of strategies of composition and of the depositing of paint on canvas. Of the well-known painting of Freud's mother lying down, Salle said, "It has the same palette as 'Whistler's Mother'—a ravishing palette." In the last rooms of the show, where the provocative large paintings of the overweight performance artist Leigh Bowery were hanging, Salle permitted himself a negative comment. "That's completely unremarkable," he said of "Naked Man, Back View," a huge painting of a seated, naked Bowery. He added, "Freud is adored for being 'bad'—by the same people who hate my work because I'm 'bad.' "

I recalled a conversation I'd once had with Salle about Francis Bacon. Salle had been speaking about his own work, about his images of women—"They're all kind of dire, they have a dire cast," he said—and I had asked him, speaking of dire, whether Bacon had been an influence. "You're not the first person to ask me that," Salle said. "Several people have observed that to me. Bacon is actually not an artist I'm interested in, but lately I've been thinking about him a lot in attempting to defend myself against certain criticisms. If you turned these criticisms around and levelled them against Bacon, it would be absurd. No one would ever say these things about Bacon. And it's purely because his work is homosexual and mine is heterosexual. The same attitudes transposed are incorrect."

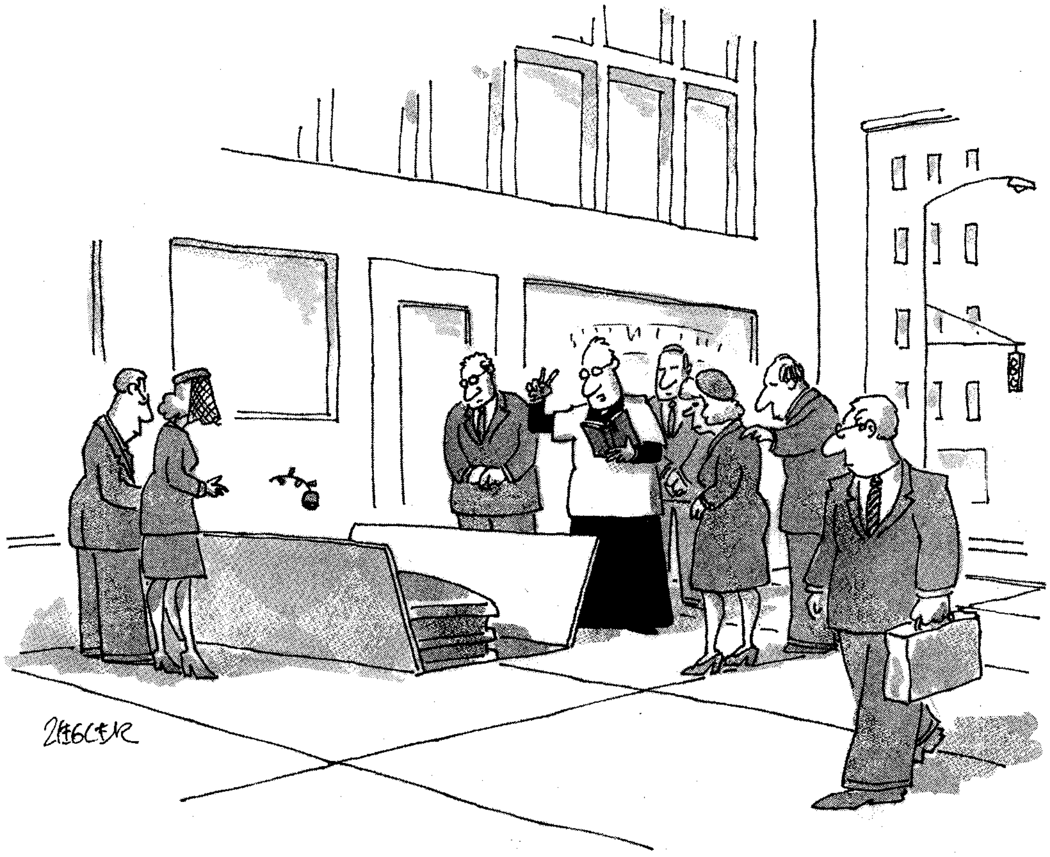
"Why are dire images done by a homosexual more correct than those done by a heterosexual?"

"Because in art politics to be homosexual is, a priori, more correct than to be heterosexual. Because to be an artist is to be an outsider, and to be a gay artist is to be a double outsider. That's the correct condition. If you're a straight artist, it's not clear that your outsiderness is legitimate. I know this is totally absurd, that I'm making it sound totally absurd. But the fact is that in our culture it does fall primarily to gays and blacks to make something interesting. Almost everything from the straight white culture is less interesting, and has been for a long time."

35

AFTER the opening of a show of David Salle's drawings at the uptown Gagosian Gallery in March, 1992, a celebratory dinner was held at a suavely elegant restaurant in the East Seventies, and as the evening proceeded I was struck by the charm and gaiety of the occasion. The ritual celebrations of artistic achievement—the book parties, the opening-night parties, the artists' dinners—give outward form to, and briefly make real, the writer's or performer's or painter's fantasy that he is living in a world that wishes him well and wants to reward him for his work. For a few hours, the person who has recently emerged from the "horrible pit," as Salle once called it, of his creative struggles is lulled into forgetting that the world is indifferent to him and intent only on its own pleasures. Occasionally, the world is pleased to applaud and reward an artist, but more often than not it will carelessly pass him by. And what the world gives, it delights in taking away: the applauded and rewarded artist does not remain so; the world likes to reverse itself. What gives the book party or the opening-night party or the artist's dinner its peculiar feverish glitter is the lightly buried consciousness of the probable bad fate that awaits the artist's offering.

Since shows of painters' drawings are considered relatively minor affairs, the dinner was a small one (for about twenty people) and had a more relaxed and less complicated atmosphere than a full-scale show would have elicited. The restaurant was a very expensive and a very good one; we ordered carefully and ate seriously. Salle, who was wearing a kind of sailor's blouse, sat quietly and calmly and watchfully, like a boy at a birthday party. I retain an image of Sabine Rewald, a curator at the Metropolitan, who looks like a Vermeer, lifting a spoonful of pink sorbet to her mouth and smiling happily. My table partners—Robert Pincus-Witten, an art critic and emeritus professor of art history, who is now a director at Gagosian, and Raymond Foye, another director, who also publishes tiny, strange books of exotica, such as the poems of Francis Picabia—were masters of the art of intimate, complicit table talk. Our host, Larry Gagosian, was absent. He was out of town; the opening was evidently not important enough for him to fly in for.



"Would you please pick something and quit channel surfing."

Two years later, the opening, at the Gagosian downtown gallery, of a Salle show of eight large "Early Product Paintings," based on images in fifties advertising, was something else again. This was a high-stakes show—each painting was priced at around a hundred thousand dollars—and an entire restaurant had been hired for the artist's dinner. Things were no longer simple. Things were very complicated. The restaurant, filled with artists, writers, performers, filmmakers, collectors, critics, gallery owners, hangers-on, hummed with a sense of intrigue and with the threat of something not coming off. Gagosian, a tall, dark-skinned, gray-haired man in his late forties, with a deadpan manner, walked through the room casting looks here and there, like Rick in "Casablanca" checking the house. Pincus-Witten and Foye, again on duty, skimmed about on anxious, obscure errands. Salle (playing the Paul Henreid role?) wore a dark jacket over a tieless white shirt, and jeans, and was only slightly more reserved, detached, and watchful than usual. I left before the Vichy police came. The image I retain from this occasion, like Sabine Rewald's pink sorbet from the previous one (though it comes from the opening proper), is the sight of a tall, thin man in a gray suit, who stood in the center of the gallery and stood out from everyone else because of the aura of distinction that surrounded him. He had a face with clever, European features, but it was his bearing that was so remarkable. He carried himself like a nobleman; you expected to look down and see a pair of greyhounds at his feet. Throughout the opening, he had his arm around a young black man with an elaborate tribal hairdo. He was the painter Francesco Clemente, another of Gagosian's hundred-thousand-dollar-a-picture artists, and another of the painters who came to prominence in the nineteen-eighties. Unlike Salle, however, he has not yet seen his star fall.

During a series of talks I had with Salle, over a two-year period, he was always careful to say nothing bad about fellow-painters—even his comments on Julian Schnabel, with whom he had had a public falling out, were restrained. But I gathered from a few things he let drop about Clemente's charmed life in art that it was a bitter reminder of everything his own wasn't. "What I've been circling around trying to find a way to ask," Salle once told me, "is the simple question 'How is it that some people are basically taken seriously and others are basically not taken seriously?' " In spite of the money he makes from his art, in spite of the praise sometimes bordering on reverence he has received from advanced critics (Peter Schjeldahl, Sanford Schwartz, Lisa Liebmann, Robert Rosenblum, Michael Brenson, for example), Salle feels that admission into the highest rank of contemporary painting has been denied him, that he will always be placed among the second-stringers, that he will never be considered one of the big sluggers.

36

The artist David Salle, in a 1990 catalogue of his prints called the "Canfield Hatfield" series (A. J. Liebling wrote about Hatfield in "The Honest Rainmaker"), wrote, "Professor Canfield Hatfield was a supposedly real-life character who figured prominently in racetrack operations and betting schemes of all types in this country in the first part of the twentieth century. Among the Professor's many activities to promote belief in a higher system of control over seemingly random events were his exploits as a paid maker of rain for drought-stricken communities in the West—a high-wager kind of job and by extension a useful metaphor for the relationship between risk, hope, and fraud that enter into any art-making or rain-making situation."

37

The lax genre of personality journalism would not seem to be the most congenial medium for a man of

David Salle's sharp, odd mind and cool, irritable temperament. And yet this forty-one-year-old painter has possibly given more interviews than any other contemporary artist. Although the published results have, more often than not, disappointed him, they have not deterred him from further fraternization with the press; when I was interviewing him, in 1992 and 1993, he would regularly mention other interviews he was giving. One of them—an interview with Eileen Daspin, of the magazine *W*—turned out badly. Salle lost his subject's wager that the interviewer's sympathetic stance wasn't a complete sham, and had to endure the vexation of reading a piece about himself that shimmered with hostility and turned his words against him. "It can't be easy being David Salle in the 1990's," Daspin wrote, in the October, 1993, issue. "He is definitely out. Like fern bars and quiche. A condition that's a little hard to take after having been one of the genius artist boy wonders of the Eighties." This was the style and tone of the article. Salle himself sounded petulant and egotistical. ("I was completely ignored by the same people at the beginning of my career who then celebrated me and who are now happy to ignore me.")

A month or so later, Salle told me of his feelings about the article. "I read it very, very quickly, in disgust, and threw the magazine in the trash. I had been ambushed. I should have known better. I have no one to blame but myself. She gave off plenty of signals that should have raised alarms. It led to my saying some interesting things—except I said them to the wrong person."

"It interests me that you always take responsibility for the interview—that if you don't like it, you blame yourself rather than the interviewer."

"Oh, I can blame her," Salle said. "I didn't do it single-handed. She did it. She kept saying 'What does it feel like to be a has-been? Don't you feel bad being put in the position of a has-been?' and I kept saying—with a misguided sense of pedagogical mission—'Well, you have to understand that this has a context and a history and a trajectory.' I was talking about the tyranny of the left. But it came out with her saying merely how angry and unhappy I was about being a has-been. All the pains I took to explain the context had gone for nothing."

"She made you sound like a very aggressive and unpleasant person."

"Maybe I am. I was trying out the thesis that the art world lionizes bullies. In any case, I'm reaching the point where I'm resigned to being misinterpreted. Instead of seeing this as a bad fate that befell me through no fault of my own, I now see it as a natural state of affairs for an artist. I almost don't see how it can be otherwise."

"Then why do you give all these interviews?"

Salle thought for a moment. "It's a lazy person's form of writing. It's like writing without having to write. It's a form in which one can make something, and I like to make things."

I remembered something Salle had once made that had failed, like the *W* interview, and that he had destroyed in disgust, as he had destroyed his copy of the magazine. It was a painting of two ballet dancers.

38

THE artist David Salle—as if speaking of another person—once talked to me about his impatience. "I have a way of making people feel that they don't have my attention, that I have lost interest and turned away. People I'm close to have complained about it."

"And then?"

"I get even more impatient."

"Is it that your thoughts wander?"

"I start thinking that my life is going to be over soon. It's that simple. I don't have that much time left. I felt this way when I was twenty."

Salle had recently turned forty. He had noticed—without drawing the almost too obvious inference—that he was cutting images of watches out of newspapers and magazines. One day, after arriving a little late for an appointment with me, he apologized and then told me that he used to be obsessively punctual. "I had to train myself not to arrive exactly on the dot. It was absurd and unseemly to be so punctual. It was particularly unseemly for an artist to be so punctual."

I asked Salle what his punctuality had been about.

"I think it had to do with focussing so much on people's expectations of me. But it was also because I myself hate to wait. For all my, I'm sure, bottomless inconsiderateness of other people, I'm always empathizing with the other person. I empathize with the torturer. I find it very easy to empathize with Robert Hughes when he writes of his aversion to my work. I feel I know exactly what he's thinking and why. It's a kind of arrogance, I know, but I feel sorry for him. He doesn't know any better. I had to learn to be late and I had to learn to be cruel, to exude hostility. But it's not really my nature. I do it badly, because it's not who I am."

39

TOWARD the end of a long series of interviews with the artist David Salle, I received this letter from him:

> After the many hours of trying to step outside of myself in order to talk about who or what I am, I feel that the only thing that really matters in art and in life is to go against the tidal wave of literalism and literal-mindedness—to insist on and *live* the life of the imagination. A painting has to be the experience, instead of pointing to it. I want to have and to give *access to feeling*. That is the riskiest and only important way to connect art to the world—to make it alive. Everything else is just current events.
>
> Most of our conversations, I think, were about how this idea has a special frequency which is easily drowned out by the din of the moment. That is, we talked, or I talked, mostly about its being "drowned out." But the important thing is not really the "underdogness" of it—but just the feeling itself.

40

TO write about the painter David Salle is to be forced into a kind of parody of his melancholy art of fragments, quotations, absences—an art that refuses to be any one thing or to find any one thing more interesting, beautiful, or significant than another.

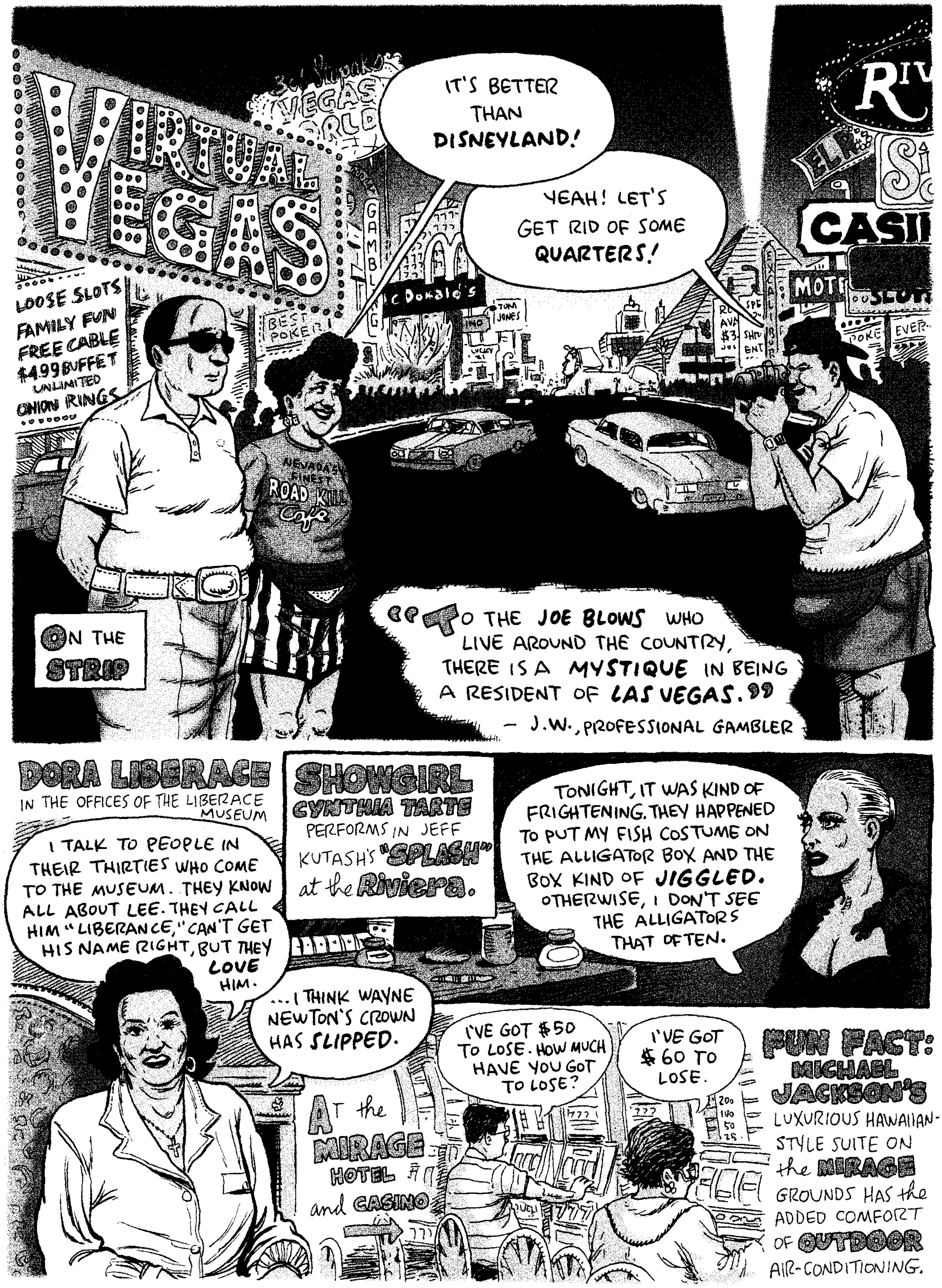
41

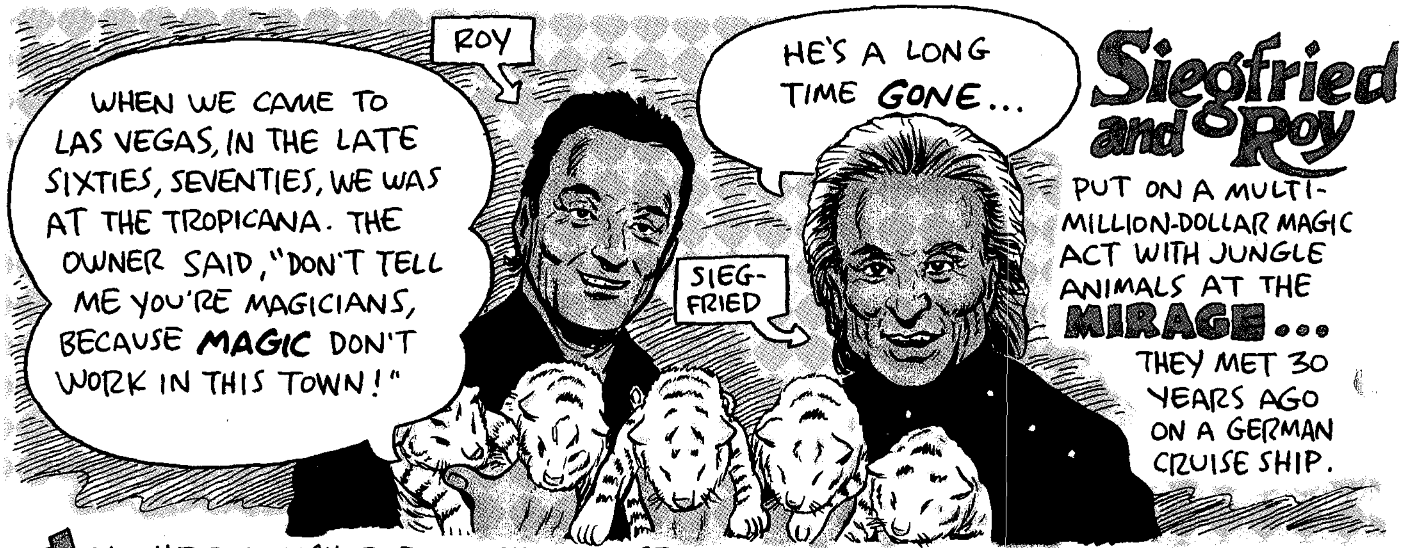
ONE day, toward the end of a conversation I was having with the painter David Salle in his studio, on White Street, he looked at me and said, "Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever thought that your real life hasn't begun yet?"

"I think I know what you mean."

"You know—soon. Soon you'll start your real life." ♦

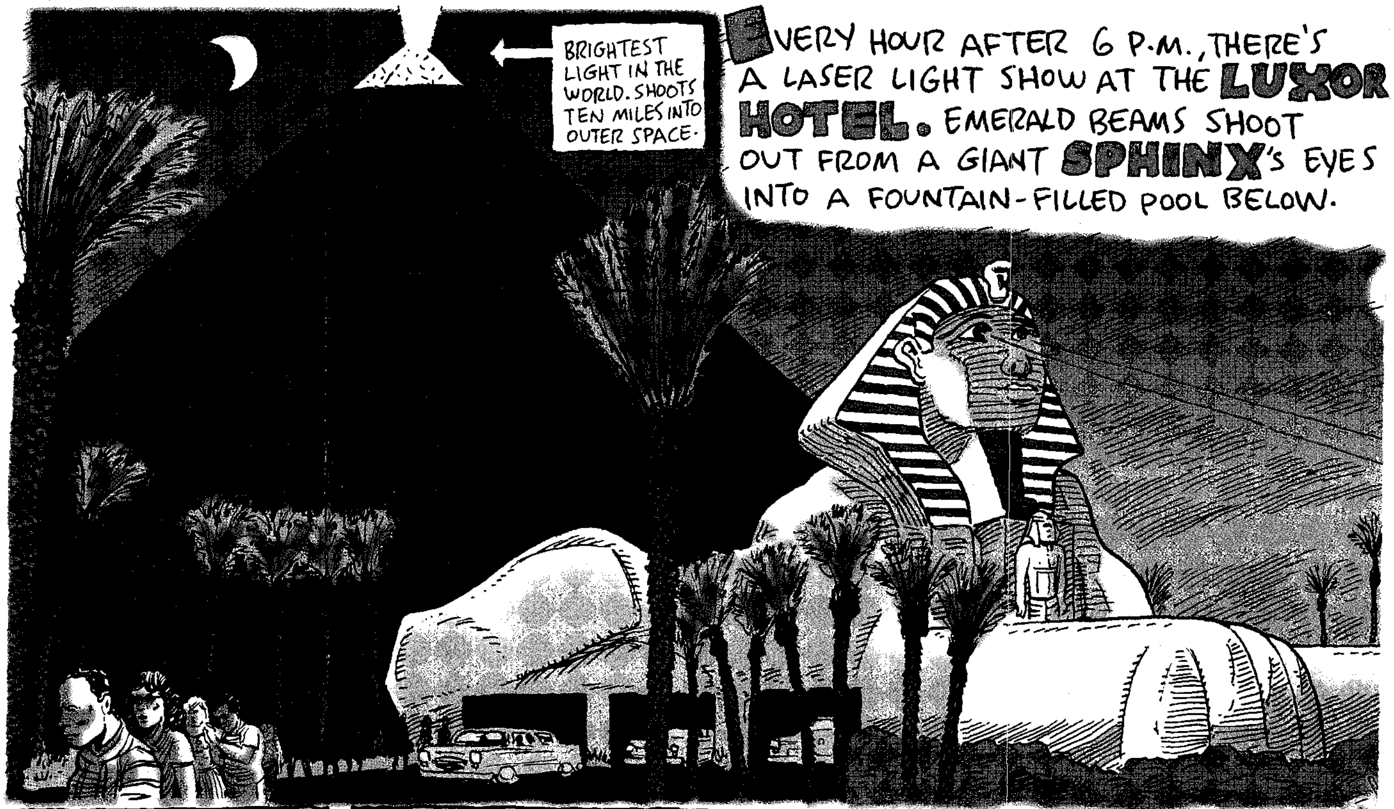
ARTIST AT LARGE • BY BILL GRIFFITH


Bob Stupak's VEGAS WORLD
VIRTUAL VEGAS
LOOSE SLOTS
FAMILY FUN
FREE CABLE
$4.99 BUFFET
UNLIMITED ONION RINGS
BEST POKER
GAMBLING
McDonald's
TOM JONES
RIV
CASI
MOT
SLOT
POKE
EVER
IT'S BETTER THAN DISNEYLAND!
YEAH! LET'S GET RID OF SOME QUARTERS!
NEVADA'S FINEST ROAD KILL Cafe
ON THE STRIP
"TO THE JOE BLOWS WHO LIVE AROUND THE COUNTRY, THERE IS A MYSTIQUE IN BEING A RESIDENT OF LAS VEGAS." — J.W., PROFESSIONAL GAMBLER
DORA LIBERACE IN THE OFFICES OF THE LIBERACE MUSEUM
I TALK TO PEOPLE IN THEIR THIRTIES WHO COME TO THE MUSEUM. THEY KNOW ALL ABOUT LEE. THEY CALL HIM "LIBERANCE," CAN'T GET HIS NAME RIGHT, BUT THEY LOVE HIM.
...I THINK WAYNE NEWTON'S CROWN HAS SLIPPED.
SHOWGIRL CYNTHIA TARTE PERFORMS IN JEFF KUTASH'S "SPLASH" at the Riviera.
TONIGHT, IT WAS KIND OF FRIGHTENING. THEY HAPPENED TO PUT MY FISH COSTUME ON THE ALLIGATOR BOX AND THE BOX KIND OF JIGGLED. OTHERWISE, I DON'T SEE THE ALLIGATORS THAT OFTEN.
AT the MIRAGE HOTEL and CASINO
I'VE GOT $50 TO LOSE. HOW MUCH HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?
I'VE GOT $60 TO LOSE.
777
FUN FACT: MICHAEL JACKSON'S LUXURIOUS HAWAIIAN-STYLE SUITE ON the MIRAGE GROUNDS HAS the ADDED COMFORT OF OUTDOOR AIR-CONDITIONING.

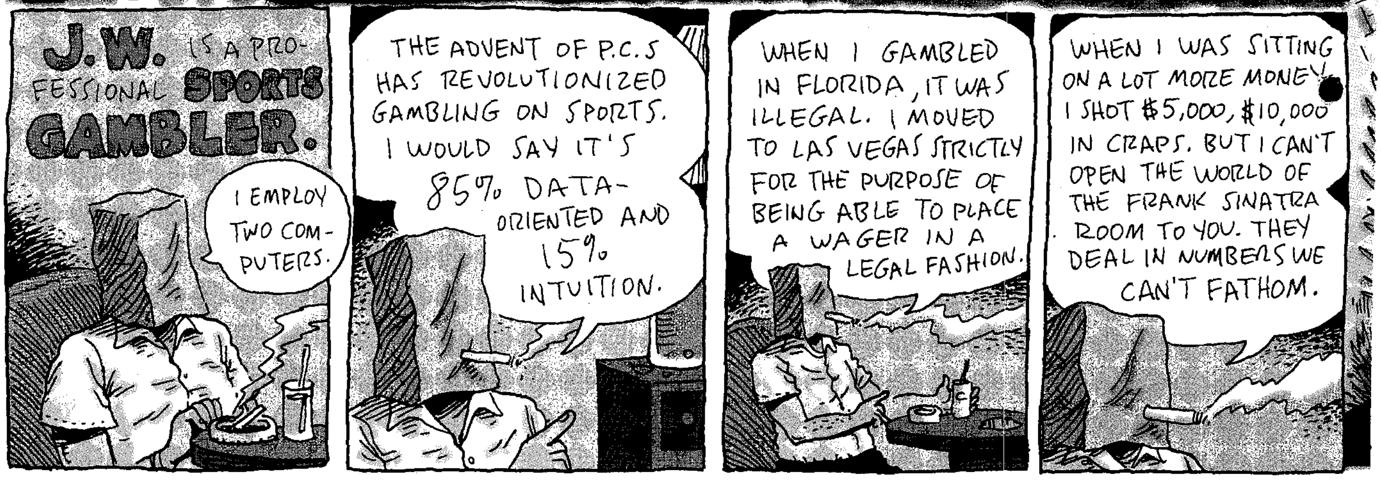

ROY
WHEN WE CAME TO LAS VEGAS, IN THE LATE SIXTIES, SEVENTIES, WE WAS AT THE TROPICANA. THE OWNER SAID, "DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE MAGICIANS, BECAUSE MAGIC DON'T WORK IN THIS TOWN!"
HE'S A LONG TIME GONE...
SIEG-FRIED

Siegfried and Roy PUT ON A MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR MAGIC ACT WITH JUNGLE ANIMALS AT THE **MIRAGE**... THEY MET 30 YEARS AGO ON A GERMAN CRUISE SHIP.

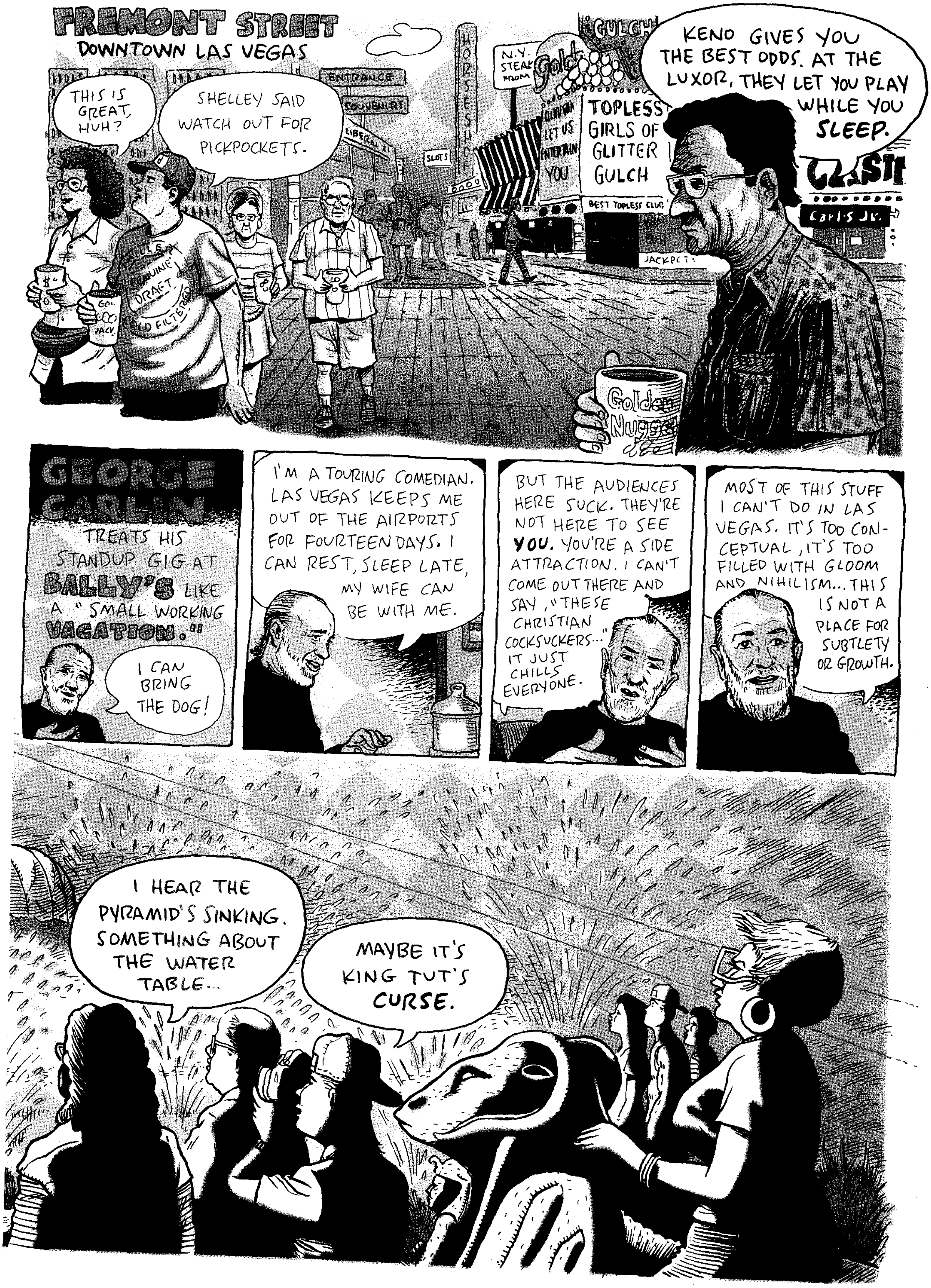
IN THEIR PLUSH PAD AT THE MIRAGE HOTEL, THE TWO SHOWMEN KEEP A **SNOW LEOPARD** IN A CAGE THE SIZE OF A STALL SHOWER. "WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES TO THE PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES," SAYS ROY.

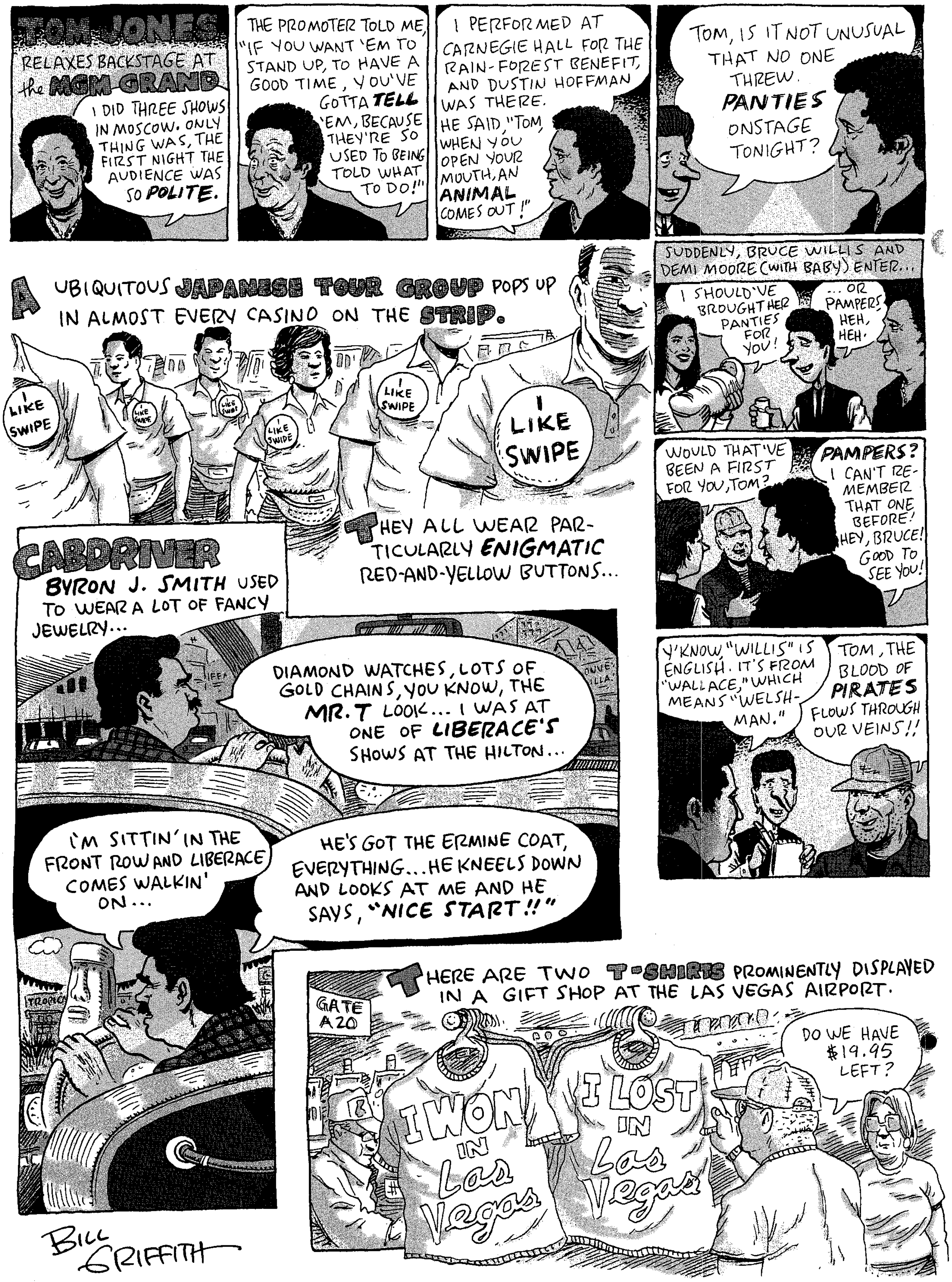

BRIGHTEST LIGHT IN THE WORLD. SHOOTS TEN MILES INTO OUTER SPACE.

EVERY HOUR AFTER 6 P.M., THERE'S A LASER LIGHT SHOW AT THE **LUXOR HOTEL**. EMERALD BEAMS SHOOT OUT FROM A GIANT **SPHINX**'S EYES INTO A FOUNTAIN-FILLED POOL BELOW.


J.W. IS A PROFESSIONAL **SPORTS GAMBLER.**

I EMPLOY TWO COMPUTERS.
THE ADVENT OF P.C.S HAS REVOLUTIONIZED GAMBLING ON SPORTS. I WOULD SAY IT'S 85% DATA-ORIENTED AND 15% INTUITION.
WHEN I GAMBLED IN FLORIDA, IT WAS ILLEGAL. I MOVED TO LAS VEGAS STRICTLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF BEING ABLE TO PLACE A WAGER IN A LEGAL FASHION.
WHEN I WAS SITTING ON A LOT MORE MONEY I SHOT $5,000, $10,000 IN CRAPS. BUT I CAN'T OPEN THE WORLD OF THE FRANK SINATRA ROOM TO YOU. THEY DEAL IN NUMBERS WE CAN'T FATHOM.


FREMONT STREET
DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS
THIS IS GREAT, HUH?
SHELLEY SAID WATCH OUT FOR PICKPOCKETS.
KENO GIVES YOU THE BEST ODDS. AT THE LUXOR, THEY LET YOU PLAY WHILE YOU SLEEP.
ENTRANCE
SOUVENIRS
LIBERAL 21
SLOTS
HORSESHOE
N.Y. STEAK
Golden
GULCH
TOPLESS GIRLS OF GLITTER GULCH
LET US ENTERTAIN YOU
BEST TOPLESS CLUB
JACKPOT
Carl's Jr.
MILLER GENUINE DRAFT COLD FILTERED
Golden Nugget
GEORGE CARLIN TREATS HIS STANDUP GIG AT BALLY'S LIKE A "SMALL WORKING VACATION."
I CAN BRING THE DOG!
I'M A TOURING COMEDIAN. LAS VEGAS KEEPS ME OUT OF THE AIRPORTS FOR FOURTEEN DAYS. I CAN REST, SLEEP LATE, MY WIFE CAN BE WITH ME.
BUT THE AUDIENCES HERE SUCK. THEY'RE NOT HERE TO SEE YOU. YOU'RE A SIDE ATTRACTION. I CAN'T COME OUT THERE AND SAY, "THESE CHRISTIAN COCKSUCKERS..." IT JUST CHILLS EVERYONE.
MOST OF THIS STUFF I CAN'T DO IN LAS VEGAS. IT'S TOO CONCEPTUAL, IT'S TOO FILLED WITH GLOOM AND NIHILISM... THIS IS NOT A PLACE FOR SUBTLETY OR GROWTH.
I HEAR THE PYRAMID'S SINKING. SOMETHING ABOUT THE WATER TABLE...
MAYBE IT'S KING TUT'S CURSE.


TOM JONES RELAXES BACKSTAGE AT the MGM GRAND
I DID THREE SHOWS IN MOSCOW. ONLY THING WAS, THE FIRST NIGHT THE AUDIENCE WAS SO POLITE.
THE PROMOTER TOLD ME, "IF YOU WANT 'EM TO STAND UP, TO HAVE A GOOD TIME, YOU'VE GOTTA TELL 'EM, BECAUSE THEY'RE SO USED TO BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO!"
I PERFORMED AT CARNEGIE HALL FOR THE RAIN-FOREST BENEFIT, AND DUSTIN HOFFMAN WAS THERE. HE SAID, "TOM, WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH, AN ANIMAL COMES OUT!"
TOM, IS IT NOT UNUSUAL THAT NO ONE THREW PANTIES ONSTAGE TONIGHT?
SUDDENLY, BRUCE WILLIS AND DEMI MOORE (WITH BABY) ENTER...
I SHOULD'VE BROUGHT HER PANTIES FOR YOU!
... OR PAMPERS! HEH, HEH.
WOULD THAT'VE BEEN A FIRST FOR YOU, TOM?
PAMPERS? I CAN'T REMEMBER THAT ONE BEFORE! HEY, BRUCE! GOOD TO SEE YOU!
Y'KNOW, "WILLIS" IS ENGLISH. IT'S FROM "WALLACE," WHICH MEANS "WELSHMAN."
TOM, THE BLOOD OF PIRATES FLOWS THROUGH OUR VEINS!!
A UBIQUITOUS JAPANESE TOUR GROUP POPS UP IN ALMOST EVERY CASINO ON THE STRIP.
I LIKE SWIPE
I LIKE SWIPE
I LIKE SWIPE
I LIKE SWIPE
I LIKE SWIPE
I LIKE SWIPE
THEY ALL WEAR PARTICULARLY ENIGMATIC RED-AND-YELLOW BUTTONS...
CABDRIVER BYRON J. SMITH USED TO WEAR A LOT OF FANCY JEWELRY...
DIAMOND WATCHES, LOTS OF GOLD CHAINS, YOU KNOW, THE MR. T LOOK... I WAS AT ONE OF LIBERACE'S SHOWS AT THE HILTON...
I'M SITTIN' IN THE FRONT ROW AND LIBERACE COMES WALKIN' ON...
HE'S GOT THE ERMINE COAT, EVERYTHING... HE KNEELS DOWN AND LOOKS AT ME AND HE SAYS, "NICE START!!"
TROPIC
THERE ARE TWO T-SHIRTS PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED IN A GIFT SHOP AT THE LAS VEGAS AIRPORT.
GATE A20
I WON IN Las Vegas
I LOST IN Las Vegas
DO WE HAVE $19.95 LEFT?
BILL GRIFFITH

FICTION

SIN

BY EDNA O'BRIEN

THEY were in. In. Mother, father, and daughter. She waited to hear them come in, stayed awake. She would be awake anyhow, because sleep was paying her less and less court as the years went on. Occasionally, she took a tablet, but dreaded being at the mercy of any drug and had a secondary dread of one day not being able to get it, or not being able to afford it. In those wide-awake vigils she prayed or tried to, but prayer, like sleep, was on the wane now, at the very time when she should be pressing her maker for favors. The prayers came only from her lips, not from deep within—she had lost that heartfelt rapport she once had with God. When the prayers became meaningless, she went around her house in her mind and thought of improvements she would make this year or next—new wallpaper in the big room, where the pink was soiled around the window frames, brown smears from all the damp. And then in the vacant room, where apples were stored, the wallpaper had been hung upside-down and had survived the years without anyone knowing that the acorns and the branches were the wrong way around. She might have that replaced, too, just to get the better of those fools who hung it incorrectly. She was a woman who liked to be always in the right. Funny that on the day the paper was hung she had consulted some seer in the city about a certain matter and had been told that she would go home and find these fruits and bobbins the wrong way up, and she did. In other quarters of her house, she was more spartan with her improvements; she thought of maybe a new strip of linoleum inside the hall door, to save the tiles from trampling boots. Scrubbing was hard for her now, hard on her lower back. Then there were little things, like new towels and tea towels and dishcloths—dishcloths smelled of milk no matter how she soaked or boiled them. They had that sour, gone-off smell. Smell was her strongest sense, and when these paying guests arrived that morning she smelled the woman's perfume and the daughter's—identical, and yet nothing else about them seemed alike. The daughter, Samantha, blond and cocksure, screwed up her eyes as if she were thinking something mathematical, when all she was thinking was Look at me, admire me. She touted for their attention. Her hair was her chief weapon—long hair, which she swept along the table as she looked carefully at the wallpaper or at her parents or at a picture over the whatnot, of pussycats who were trying to move the hands of a clock on to feeding time. She kept insisting that her parents have a bite of her toast, or a taste of her porridge, because it was yummy. Her skirt was nothing short of nude—a bib, really, to draw attention to her thighs, like pillars of solid nougat inside her cream lace stockings. The mother was dark and plump and made a habit of touching the daughter whenever she jumped up in one of her fits of simulated exuberance. The father smoked a pipe. He was a handsome man, tall and distant.

They ate breakfast, then had to have a basket packed with hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches for their boating expedition. She explained that they must make their own arrangements for dinner. When they came back, she heard them say "Sh-h-h, sh-h-h" repeatedly as they climbed the stairs. They used the bathroom in turn. She could tell by their footsteps, and had to concede that they were doing their best to be quiet—that is, until something went crash-crash and the mother went to the rescue of the daughter. She reckoned it was the china tooth mug. She loved that tooth mug, cream with green fluting and little garlands of shamrock, and she wanted to get up and tackle them, but something stopped her. Also, she did not have a dressing gown. Would they be in their dressing gowns? The woman possibly yes, and the man in his shirtsleeves. She would miss the tooth mug, she would mourn it. Her things had become her beloveds, all else gone, or scattered in distant places. She knew—oh, yes, she knew—that the love of children gets fainter and fainter, like a garment that's washed and rewashed until it is only a shadow of its original color, its crimson or royal blue. Their daughter, their Samantha, would be like that soon, would skedaddle once she had other interests, men and so forth.

The parents had the blue room, which had been her and her husband's bridal room, the one where her children were born and where as the years went on she slept as little as possible and went only when she was compelled to, when he roared for her. She went to keep him quiet, to keep him off the batter—went in disgust and stayed in disgust and afterward rinsed and washed herself of it all. Five children were enough for any woman. Four scattered children and one dead, and a daughter-in-law who had made her son, her only son, the essence of graspingness. Still, she must not be too hard on them. The girls remembered when they remembered, they sent gifts, especially the one overseas, and next time when asked what she wanted she would say a dressing gown, and then she could confront her lodgers.

She only kept people in summer, partly because they only came then but also because to heat the house in winter would be impossible, as it swallowed up tankers of oil. Moreover, she never kept people for more than two nights, believing they might get forward and start to think the house was theirs, opening wardrobes and doors, making free. Her other reason was more of a secret. She was afraid that she might grow attached to them and ask them to stay. With the takings, she made improvements to the house but never indulged in a luxury for herself except for the jam and tins of biscuits for her sweet tooth.

YES, they were in her marriage bed, a wide bed with an oak headboard that rattled and a rose quilt that she had

THE FURROW

Did I think it would abide as it was forever
all that time ago the turned earth in the old garden
where I stood in spring remembering spring in another place
that had ceased to exist and the dug roots kept giving up
their black tokens their coins and bone buttons and shoe nails
made by hands and bits of plates as the thin clouds
of that season slipped past gray branches on which the early
white petals were catching their light and I thought I knew
something of age my own age then which had conveyed me
to there and the ages of the trees and the walls and houses
from before my coming and the age of the new seeds as I
set each one in the ground to begin to remember
what to become and the order in which to return
and even the other age into which I was passing
all the time while I was thinking of something different

—W. S. Merwin

made during her betrothal, stitching all her dreamings into it. She imagined them, man and wife, lying side by side, the square pouches of the quilt rising and sinking with their breath, and she remembered the clutching of it and the plucking of some of the feathers as her husband made wrathful and unloving love to her. How might it have been with another man, a gentler, more considerate man? The girl was probably not asleep, but shaping her eyebrows or brushing the long spill of hair, brushing it slowly and maybe even examining herself in the mirror, admiring her plump, firm little figure inside her short nightgown. After they went out to dinner, she had peered into their rooms. She did not open their suitcases, as a point of honor, but she studied some of their possessions, the woman's string of pearls, her cosmetics, and her dark-brown hair net, which lay stealthily next to his pipes, pipes of different-colored wood, and a folded swag of mulchy tobacco. Their money, English money, was piled into two little banks—his money and her money, she felt. On the girl's dressing table there was only the hairbrush, cotton buds, and baby oil. The diaphanous nightie was laid out on the pillow and looked lifelike, as if there were a doll inside it.

Sleep would not come. She got up, intending to go look at the broken tooth mug, but as soon as she reached the door something prevented her. She was ashamed of being heard by them. It was as if the house had become theirs and she, the lodger, beholden to them. Something about their being a family, and all over each other, and blowing about what a brilliant time they were having galled her. She paced. Pacing was one of the things she did at night, but now she felt that it, too, was wrong—revealing—and so she crept back into her bed and waited for the blessing of sleep. Sleep often came unbeknownst to her. It was not preceded by yawning or drowsiness. There she would be, totting up what guests owed her, taking it and putting it in the big orange bowl where the spoils of the summer were kept, and all of a sudden it would be morning, the sun giving a rich, red-wine glow to the velvet curtains, or the rain pouring down and her little dog, Gigi, on his hind legs, looking up at her window, waiting for her to get up and come down and open the back door and serve him a saucer of tea with milk. Over the years, he had grown more like a human and was undoubtedly her most faithful friend.

With some visitors she found it more difficult to get to sleep. They unnerved her or she began thinking about them, speculating about their lives, their earnings, their happiness, and so forth, and so it was with these three. It was as if she had to be awake, to keep a watch.

Exactly half an hour after they had retired, it happened. She heard a creak, the girl's door opening slowly, and she thought it was bathroom need, but, no, she heard her go toward their room on tiptoe and then she heard a tap, a series of taps, light and playful—not the tapping of a sick or overwrought child, not the tapping of someone disturbed by a mouse or a bumblebee—and in that second she knew it. Her whole body went into spasm. She heard the girl go into their room, and then everything became so silent, the atmosphere so tense, that her hand, jerking her own doorknob, made her jump. She opened her door very softly and moved in their direction, not certain what exactly she would do. The whole house seemed to wait. They were not talking, yet what reached her ears could not be called silence. Something terrible was being enacted in there, a rite of whispering and tittering and lewd laughter. She could not see, yet her eyes seemed to penetrate through the panelled door as if it were sheer glass and she could picture them—hands, mouths, limbs, all searching for one another. They had not dared to put on a light. The girl was probably naked, or else wore her scarf like a sarong, moving with them in their macabre dance, yielding, allowing them to fondle her, the man fondling her in one place, the woman fondling her elsewhere—an orgy of caresses and whispers and sighs that rent the air. Those sighs and whispers magnified.

She would break the door down. It was not enough simply to open it. She would catch them out, the man, lord of his harem, straddled over a girl who was in no way his daughter, and the woman ministering, because that was the only way she could hold on to him. Vile. Vile. There was a poker in there, in the coal scuttle, left since her last confinement, thirty years ago, and she was already picking it up. She would break it on their bare romping bodies. What detained her she could not say. Everything determined that she go in, and yet she waited in some wanton hesitation, as if she were waiting for their smell.

Their exclamations were what sent her scurrying back to her own room, the three pitches of sound so different—the woman's loud and gusty, the girl's helpless, almost as if she were crying, and, sometime later, his, like a jackass down in the woods with his lady love. She sat on the edge of her bed in a simmer. They would have to go in the morning. She would let them know why. She would convey it to them, insinuate that the girl was not their daughter, but she would never know for sure, and that, plus the vile pageant in the dark, would torment her and be a plague on her house until the day she died. ◆

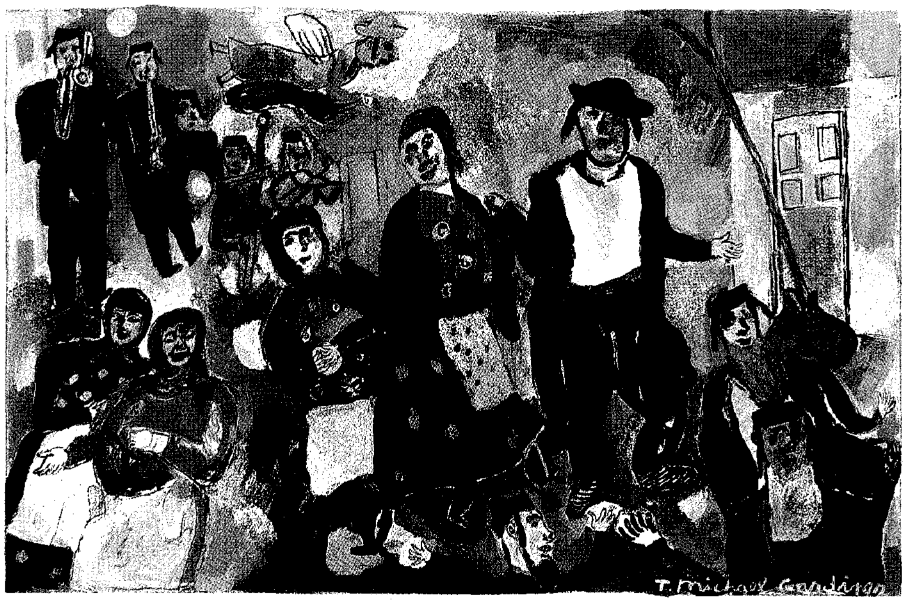
THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

BRING BACK THE CLOWNS

BY JOHN LAHR

A LINE is an unusual sight at any theatre these days; so it seemed especially promising on a sunny afternoon on Memorial Day weekend to see a double-domed Harvard audience queuing at the Loeb Drama Center, in Cambridge, for tickets to the American Repertory Theatre's world première of "Shlemiel the First," a musical about the imaginary town of Chelm, a village of fools invented by Isaac Bashevis Singer for his children's stories. (The show, a co-production of the American Repertory Theatre and the American Music Theatre Festival, will have four performances, beginning July 7th, as part of the Serious Fun Festival at the John Jay Theatre, at Lincoln Center, before returning by popular demand to the Loeb in September.) Conceived, and splendidly adapted for the stage, by the A.R.T.'s artistic director, Robert Brustein, the musical is built around the clamor of a klezmer band performing traditional Jewish music. "Storytelling has become a forgotten art and has been replaced by amateurish sociology and hackneyed psychology," Singer wrote in a postscript to a collection of his children's fiction. The same is true of the contemporary musical. Playfulness has been replaced by pontificating, comedy by commentary. "Events never get stale," Singer said. "Commentaries often are stale from the very beginning." And commentaries are what has been sinking the plots of the lyric-heavy, solemn-swaggering contemporary musicals. For instance, "Tommy," a "rock opera," acts out the Second World War in its first fifteen minutes; "Kiss of the Spider Woman" waves photographs of "the disappeared"; "Miss Saigon" serves up a helicopter, Vietnam, and snapshots of *bui-doi*, the abandoned children of Asians and United States military personnel; "Cats" ends with an image of feline resurrection; "Passion" purveys Stephen Sondheim's cant about love ("as permanent as death") as if it were philosophy. When the musical was "musical comedy" (a term in rapid decline by the mid-forties, with the prestige of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "musical play"), the clowns brought vulgarity and humanity to the proceedings. But humble pie is no longer on the musical's menu. Pretension has superseded celebration. Brustein has often inveighed against this mutation from his catbird seat at *The New Republic*, where he has been drama critic for most of the last thirty-five years. According to him, "Shlemiel the First" is meant to be an antidote to the genre's atrophy of heart, whose aim is "to get back to a musical form that has joy in it."



"Shlemiel the First": Putting joy back into the musical.

And "Shlemiel the First" is busting its buttons with joy. From the opening beats of David Gordon's fresh and elegant production, "Shlemiel the First" announces its liberation from banality. Chelm is no slice-of-life shtetl but a surreal landscape that is impossible to second-guess. The play's world is a clown's world—a world turned upside down in Robert Israel's witty, lopsided design, which filters a traditional tale through an avant-garde aesthetic. The set broadcasts a fable's innocent logic: the raked stage floor has crimps in it; the threshold and the tables are vividly abstracted and angled; the stacked dresser drawers have no bureau; and two backdrops—

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one of gray clouds branded with Miró curlicues, the other a centerpiece of pink—capture in their contrasting intensities the bittersweet undercurrents of both the story and the music. (The klezmer sound, like the blues, has irony built into its clamor: sorrow in joy and joy in sorrow.) When the curtain comes up, Shlemiel (Larry Block) and his disgruntled wife, Tryna Rytza (Rosalie Gerut), are asleep, but their bed is vertical. From the start, our perspective is playfully jolted out of the habitual. The production demands that we enter its topsy-turvy world, and the authority of the direction compels belief in its wacky logic.

When Tryna Rytza gets out of "bed" and begins to dress, she spells out her resignation to their arranged marriage:

> What's the difference what I feel?
> Someone somewhere made a deal.
> There's the rub, here lies my zhlub.
> I married a shlemiel.

Shlemiel is a beadle by profession—a synagogue sexton, or gofer. To his wife, he is a "crazy fool," who uses a dreidel to make decisions, and whose low estate her song deftly defines:

> Can you believe that this is all I got?
> Not a learner, not a scholar,
> Doesn't earn a single dollar.
> I could spend all day telling what he's not.

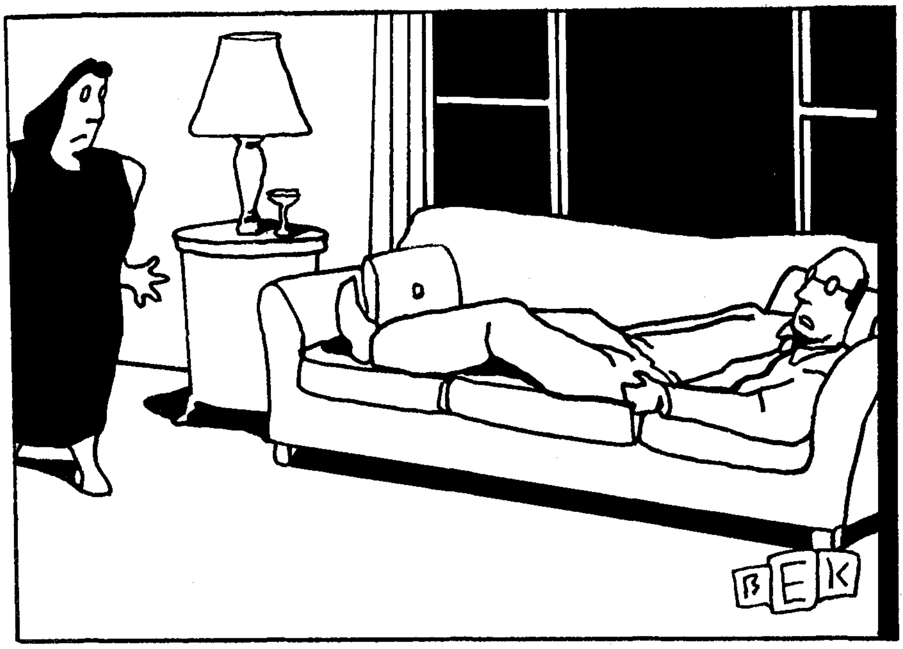
Shlemiel is a recognizable throwback to the musical's earlier tradition. He is a species of low-comic innocent: a link between Yiddish theatre and the capering buffoons of Broadway musicals in the twenties and thirties and the musicals of our own sour, pseudo-sophisticated moment, in which goodness as well as high jinks has been banished. In the old days, Shlemiel's role could have been taken by any number of funnymen—Bobby Clark, Ed Wynn, Jimmy Durante, or Jack Gilford, to name only a few. Here the agreeable Larry Block exudes a puckish sweetness but brings none of a real clown's sad-sack presence or antic instincts to the part.

In Singer's story, Shlemiel is called upon to spread the wisdom of Gronam Ox around the world. Ox is the wisest member of the village's council of six sages, having earned the laurel by solving a sour-cream shortage in the shrewdest of ways: by merely changing the term "sour cream" to "water." This solution has serious emotional repercussions. His wife, the aptly named Yenta Pesha, no longer pleases him with her blintzes, which are now thin and runny—something that Yenta (the clever and caterwauling Marilyn Sokol) makes clear while occasionally pausing to slug him with one of the pickles she carries, like six-shooters, tucked into her capacious apron. The effect is charming, and Sokol doesn't miss a laugh as she bitches about the decline of her love and her blintzes:

> My man of wisdom! My man of wisdom.
> The man I cooked my heart out making
>   blintzes for.
> He isn't very bright.
> He don't know I'm always right!
> And he doesn't like my blintzes any more.
> Gevalt!

Sokol doubles as the sixth wise man, and Gordon frequently has her change into her Yenta schmatte onstage to debate the sorry crew. While a dummy takes Sokol's place at the wise men's table, she whips off her beard and assumes the blowsy, heavy-hipped outline of a Jewish mama. Sokol literally steps into the zaftig stereotype, at which the production winks while milking it for all it's worth. Later, a few of the men don the women's Old World armor to fill out a chorus of kvetchers.

This is broad but funny stuff, and a great deal of its tastiness belongs to the affectionate precision of the lyricist, Arnold Weinstein, who has cooked up one of the finest sets of lyrics I've heard in recent years. Weinstein, whose works include "Dynamite Tonite!" (1963) and "Casino Paradise" (1990), is completely at home with the material, and his smart words sit gracefully on the notes of the gorgeous score that Hankus Netsky has composed and adapted (with additional music by Zalmen Mlotek), never pressing for insight but delivering it nonetheless. In Weinstein's showstopping "Geography," a rewrite of the Yiddish comic standard "Rumania, Rumania" (which Brustein had him do as an audition piece to test the depth of his Yiddishkeit), the meticulous rhymes sparkle with delight as they contemplate Gronam Ox's fame and keep up with the song's manic rhythm. Weinstein can make one well-chosen word lift a song into a special zone of pleasure. His sprightly lines manage to get laughs even amid the hilarious sight of dancing dunces led by Gronam Ox (Charles Levin, having a field day) himself. Between the "zets, zets, zets" and the



"My back is fine. My mind went out."

"hay diga diga"s, Gronam's vaunting vainglory comes over loud and clear:

> Everywhere, religious leaders
> Will become my biggest readers.
> Shiva, Buddha and Mohammed
> Make way for the real Melamed!

Gordon, who both directed and choreographed the piece, has a particularly good time in "Geography." The wise men dance their chairs downstage and proceed to stomp on them, do-si-do around them, slap syncopated rhythm on their backs, and then, when they finally sit down, carry out a variety of finger-popping, leg-crossing, shoe-tapping maneuvers in unison. It's a wonderful sight, whose minimalism also slyly teases the vulgar lavishness of contemporary musicals. Gordon misses no opportunity to make ingenious stage pictures. When Shlemiel goes on his hapless missionary journey, a narrative Waterloo for any story, Gordon uses the splendid Klezmer Conservatory Band not only as travelling music but as a scenic element. As Shlemiel moves through the shifting landscape, full of leafless trees and red papier-mâché boulders, Gordon manufactures the sense of a long, eventful journey by having the band move with him onstage. Its members, led by the trombonist and followed by the banjo player, the violinist, and the clarinettist, are lugged, one by one, from the wings and pulled around the stage on blankets. When Shlemiel stops to relieve himself, the band stops, too. By the time Shlemiel meets up with the Rascal (Remo Airaldi), who steals his food and points him in the wrong direction, the band is neatly offstage and back in the pit. Shlemiel may be lost, but Gordon and his collaborators definitely know where they're going.

To Singer, children's fables were "the last vestige of storytelling, logic, faith in the family, in God, and in real humanism." Inevitably, in its playfulness, "Shlemiel the First" touches something humane and consequential. In Act II, Shlemiel finds himself back home. But he comes to the witless conclusion that this is a second Chelm, and that the people who claim to be his wife and children are not related to him at all. His confusion is oxygen to the story. Husband/parent turned to stranger is a profound fear, which the musical's farce finds a way of probing. In her frustration, Tryna Rytza appeals to the wise men for a ruling. True to form, the wise men, taking Noah's ark as a precedent, reason themselves into folly and agree with Shlemiel. "If God made everything in twos, why not Jews?" Gronam Ox sings, convincing all the villagers that there are indeed two Chelms and that they are looking at Shlemiel the Second. Now confirmed as a stranger, Shlemiel is experienced as one by Tryna Rytza, who immediately falls in love with him. Mr. and Mrs. Shlemiel talk to each other like adulterers and go through all the envious badinage of infidelity. "You have a younger touch," Shlemiel tells Tryna Rytza when she inquires about his wife. "Your eyes are brighter, your voice is sweeter, your skin is smoother." And, of course, it's true: a change of heart has been engineered by the power of the imagination to see the other from a new perspective. Old angers are directed at their "absent" partners. Shlemiel worries that Tryna Rytza's husband will "tear her to pieces" when he finds out; and she counters, "Who knows what he's doing with that bitch of yours in Chelm Number One?" A sense of sin, so absent from contemporary life and the musicals about it, fuels the erotic thrill of their romance. In "Can This Be Hell?" they sing:

> Can we be bad?
> This feels too good for that.
> The taste,
> The smell . . .
> What on earth can heaven be
> If this is hell?

In the end, the sages and the confused lovers are brought to their senses by Yenta Pesha. The world is put to rights, the way only musical comedy can do it. Gronam Ox learns humility, which has its reward not in heavenly bliss but in Yenta's heavenly blintzes. ("Now his brain has immigrated to his heart," she sings. "So tonight extra zaftig blintzes à la carte.") Tryna Rytza has also had a change of heart, and now looks on Shlemiel with tolerant affection. "Husband One or Husband Two," she sings. "Each will do if either's you." This harmony accords with Singer's sense of the miraculous, and with his almost mystical detachment and refusal to suffer. Life's truths and its mistakes, the show implies, are all delusions. That is a radical point of view, which disabuses the musical and the audience of the smug comforts of boulevard nihilism. In 1974, when "Shlemiel the First" had its début as a straight play, at Yale, where Brustein was then the theatre wallah, Singer told him, "My work should be done fast, like Shakespeare—not slow, like Chekhov." "Shlemiel the First" meets Singer's requirements of pace and adds an element of wonder. In fact, it dares the musical to go back to its beginnings and start again. ♦

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DANCING

RITES OF SPRING

BY ARLENE CROCE

EVERY generation of dancers should have its own ballets to grow on, but this generation of New York City Ballet dancers doesn't need the ballets wished on it by Peter Martins' Diamond Project. A choreographers' showcase, funded initially by the Aaron Diamond Foundation, the Diamond Project threatens to become a biennial bore. In 1992, it introduced eleven works; this season, it introduced twelve, seven of which were by choreographers from the '92 season. Besides Martins himself, they were David Allan, John Alleyne, Robert LaFosse, Miriam Mahdaviani, Richard Tanner, and Lynne Taylor-Corbett. Presumably, they were back to do what they couldn't do the first time—produce ballets that can be looked at more than once. The newcomers were Ulysses Dove, Anna Laerkesen, Trey McIntyre, Kevin O'Day, and Damian Woetzel.

The Diamond Project is not a workshop: it doesn't represent months of effort and nurturing, or a collaborative process involving individuals in each other's work and the craft of choreography. It was not intended to display a house style; five of the '94 participants were N.Y.C.B. regulars, but others came from places as far-flung as California and Texas, Canada and Denmark. The race-and-gender mix was politically correct. And yet the net result was a dismal uniformity. Nearly everybody made something that was glib, vacant, and tough, or glib, vacant, and bland. Only Robert LaFosse turned out a piece it might be good to see again. Perhaps not coincidentally, LaFosse took the injunction to choreograph in classical terms with the strictest seriousness. But the trouble with the other pieces was not that they were outside the guidelines (though if this was classical ballet Tastee-Freez is premium ice cream); it was that they had no point beyond sustaining a mood. They were abrasive or they were benign. They sulked or they simpered. But they were the same ballet, and what that ballet said was that classicism is some kind of obsessive overdriven exercise, all about nothing.

The scarcity of talented choreographers in classical ballet is a harrowingly well-established fact, and it's not something that showcases can fix. Ballet isn't like Broadway. Economic conditions on Broadway keep new composers and librettists from getting their work produced, but the talent is there. At least, Stephen Sondheim said so on the "Charlie Rose" show; he said it was locked out of the big time. Ballet companies will let anybody choreograph who can string two phrases together. They are dying of hunger for the talent that *isn't* there, or isn't where they think it is. Choreography has become a devalued a[illegible] It used to be the ruling dynamic of a Broadway show: names like Jerome Robbins, Gower Champion, Bob Fosse, Michael Bennett, and Tommy Tune could virtually guarantee a hit. But, while Broadway has recovered from its addiction to a choreographer's theatre, ballet still hasn't. And it probably won't so long as crude economics have no say in the matter.

Showcases like the Diamond Project are expensive relics of an era that depended on the choreographer for prestige. For reasons of prestige alone, you'd think that after two spectacular flameouts Martins might reconsider his options. A man who rehires people who have already let him down probably thinks he has no other option, yet he has at least one. Instead of staging a dozen or so starkly budgeted productions that stand or fall on choreography alone, he might think of putting more money into fewer pieces and dressing them up a bit. Maybe even hire a librettist. Just because Balanchine could go without scenery and costumes and literary subjects, must we assume that everybody can?

And Balanchine didn't always choose to go without. Ironically, the company's most satisfying performance of a Balanchine work this season was in Act I of "A Midsummer Night's Dream"—the "story" act—with Ethan Stiefel as Oberon and Kyra Nichols as Titania. The idea that we do things Balanchine's way is what Martins thinks he is asserting by his insistence on bare choreography as the substance of a ballet, but the idea is false to Balanchine. It's even false to Martins, an exception to general policy. In every other respect, the company has dethroned its founder: it doesn't dance or play music his way; it doesn't notice new talent, especially new female talent, early enough—it doesn't train the dancers in class or cast them in the right roles at the right time. All these things Balanchine taught. His belief in the "abstract" ballet was an extension of his choreographic gift (which was an extension of his storytelling gift); he didn't try to teach it. And yet in this, his least imitable contribution to dance, the company imitates him loyally. In the Diamond Project this season you could always tell which Balanchine ballets the choreographers had been looking at (it was never, of course, at any of the non-abstract ones), and you had to wonder what they had seen: they were like the blind men feeling the elephant. And you had to blink at the fact that professional choreographers could be so innocent of the rudiments of theatre. A piece would end and start over, end and start over again. In order to accomplish this dubious effect, a section of music would be played twice or an extra section would be tacked on. Every ballet had, instead of duets, double solos. Every ballet had, instead of pas de deux, vacuous classroom doublework or Pilobolus-like wrestling contests. Every ballet was forty-five minutes too long. Stacey Calvert appeared in everything with her red hair flying. If LaFosse's "Danses de Cour" was the best of the *rose* ballets, Taylor-Corbett's "Chiaroscuro" was the most effective of the *noir* ones; it seemed to have something on its mind besides filling up space and time for the duration of the music. What that was I couldn't tell, nor could I decipher the five painted panels that had been hung by way of a décor. But Taylor-Corbett was, however tentatively, bucking the trend, and she scored highest on the applause meter.

Do we really want to see story ballets come back? Well, they are back, only choreographers don't know it. This spring, the Joffrey Ballet held its first New York season in years. It hadn't changed a bit. It did its wham-bam Arpino ballets, its MTV tribute "Billboards," and one or two classical revivals, dancing, as always, in two dimensions. The main draw of the season was the reconstruction of Massine's big allegorical number from 1933, "Les Présages"—the one that tells about the forces of darkness threatening Europe, to Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. Even at his most clunkily abstract, Massine was following a scenario, and the more earnestly he belabored his story line the more the audience loved it. Of course, audiences also love "Serenade," another Tchaikovsky ballet and one that might well have been created by Balanchine to answer the message-mongering of Massine. The point is that "Serenade," though Balanchine always denied it, is about something more than its music, the Serenade for Strings. Maybe Balanchine would have said that it's about the something-more that its music is about. The theme of Fate, central to both ballets, is congenitally Tchaikovskyan, but only in "Serenade" does it emerge as if from Tchaikovsky's consciousness. Creating the illusion that a meaning exists which is inside the music, which could not have been formed except from the process of composition—this was Balanchine's specialty. And the beauty of the illusion was often enhanced by his use of simple costumes and a bare stage. But even Balanchine at times needed more dressing to help the illusion along. He chose to manage without. It wasn't just costly décors that he was avoiding; he was also defending his ballets against designers who didn't understand them. And designers weren't the only ones.

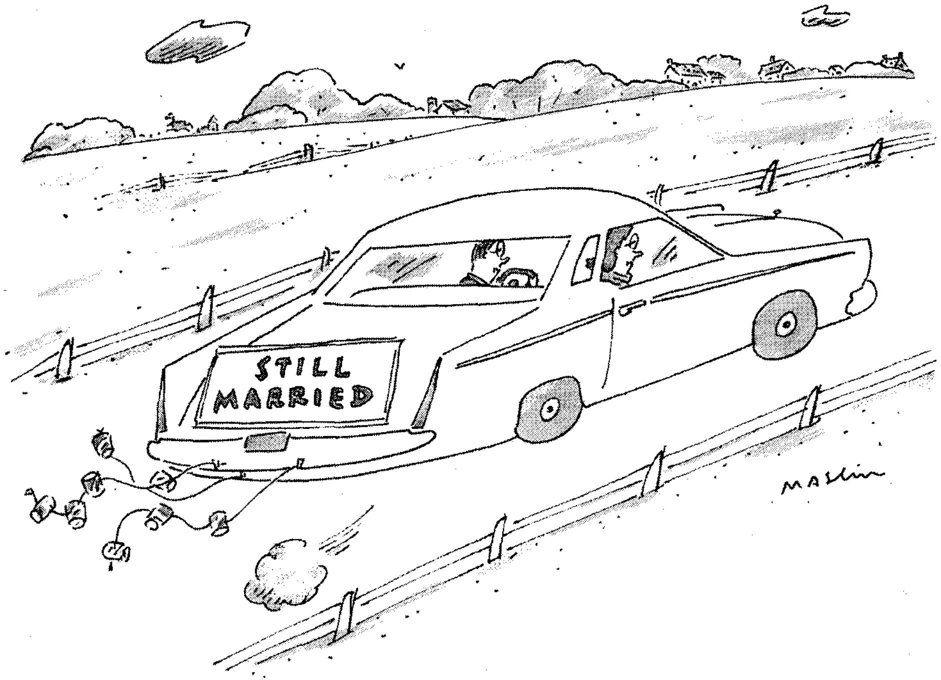
Balanchine himself staged choreography festivals from time to time, to the music of Tchaikovsky or Stravinsky or Ravel. Among the participants in those festivals were Martins and Tanner, the two leading house choreographers of the Diamond Project. Like the other choreographers under Balanchine, they tried hard. Their failure was that they really didn't see what Balanchine was getting at in forcing them to listen to so much of one composer at a time. They couldn't find the music's profile, they couldn't find themselves in it, and they couldn't find Balanchine, either. When they looked at his ballets, they saw a set of formalistic precepts. Precept No. 1: Choreography equals Ballet. I think there's a connection between Martins' lack of interest in refurbishing needy Balanchine ballets and his come-naked-to-the-ball policy for choreographers. He's made a fetish of Balanchine's frugality, hoping to enforce a standard of purity and only exposing poverty.

Peter Martins has had more success with choreography when he has been able to extrapolate meanings that are not centered in music. For the Diamond Project, he made yet another of his Mozart ballets, this one to the Piano Concerto No. 17 in G, and once again the simplicity of the music eluded him and its symmetry boxed him in. (Has Martins never wondered why Balanchine, who revered Mozart, did not hold a Mozart festival?) Much of a choreographer's work consists in deciding what is danceable music and what isn't. The twelve choreographers made some revealing choices. Only one, Laerkesen, chose a nineteenth-century score—the Brahms Violin Concerto. Four ballets were to music of the seventeenth or the eighteenth century, and six had twentieth-century scores, four of them by masters: Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Hindemith, and Bartók. LaFosse straddled the Baroque and the modern eras, with Richard Strauss's suite after François Couperin. Besides danceable rhythms, Strauss-Couperin gave LaFosse a score of manageable proportions—one that had actually been written by Strauss for the ballet of the Vienna State Opera. (It was produced in 1923.) Baroque music isn't always so accommodatingly danceable. As Martins by now must have learned, it can be a trap. You can fit the pattern or fight it, but you can't just submit to it. If Taylor-Corbett came out a winner, it was because her method of choreographing against the grain of the music (Geminiani) generated a friction the audience could take for emotion.

Mahdaviani, with her Corelli score and her gambolling dancers, had no use for this kind of tension. She avoided a fatal symmetry but fell into excess: too many notions, too many of them cute. Here is a skillful choreographer who badly needs editing and direction. O'Day is also very able, but on this occasion he had his Twyla Tharp mask clamped on so tight I could barely see him. (His music, viola sonatas by Hindemith, could hardly be more reminiscent of the Bach unaccompanied-violin scores that Tharp has used.) There was the obligatory MTV ballet, by Dove, to Richard Einhorn's electric violin. David Allan's piece, the blandest of the bland, was done to a composite of lite-classical scores by contemporary Swedish composers. The finale of this ballet, with dancers speeding across the stage and flattening themselves in whacking grand jetés, put the company on an express to Joffreyland. So, in its own way, did Laerkesen's Brahms concerto: two minutes and we were back in the era of "Les Présages." Will the lovers get together or will the corps keep them apart? The lovers got together for the whole second movement. But then they went away. The corps returned and looked thoroughly ashamed of itself.

Despite the Balanchinisms that cropped up in nearly every piece, and the Tharpisms and the MTV-isms and the Joffreyisms, and despite the fact that, as organizer and supervisor, Peter Martins seemed absent even from his own ballet, it was Martins who dominated the series. He was the man to please, as Balanchine had been in earlier times; and the marks of his choreographic style—the blandness, the anomie, the salesmanship, the competitive straining after ingenuity—established the atmosphere right from the opening number, which was Woetzel's take on Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto." This was quite simply a Peter Martins ready-made. Woetzel had been looking not at Balanchine's essays in Stravinskyan jazz (such as "Danses Concertantes," which Woetzel has performed) but at Martins' reductions of Balanchine's essays in Stravinskyan jazz. The unofficial theme of the Diamond Project was thus stated at the outset: who's setting the precedents around here?

Precedents are a big problem in a ballet company, since every choreographer, no matter how brilliant, traces patterns he can't help inheriting. But not every choreographer feels richly endowed; most feel robbed of originality from the start, so they think they have to invent. Lincoln Kirstein used to like to point out that "invent" and "inventory" are both derived from *invenire*, to come upon, discover. And Balanchine used to take regular inventory of the stock of ideas available from the past: not the choreographic past, which exists only in people's memory of "the classics," but the musical past—the tradition of *musique dansante* passed on by composer after composer. We need only examine the Diamond Project music to see how profoundly accessible a tradition is that can encompass Strauss on Couperin, Hindemith on Bach, and Stravinsky on Woody Herman. We got Corelli's "La Follia" in Mahdaviani's ballet and Geminiani's variation on "La Follia" in Taylor-Corbett's—essentially the same piece of music serving two different ballets. For Balanchine, the analogy with music was the choreographer's refuge from the crushing weight of his predecessors, even when the predecessor was himself. The crown of the Tchaikovsky Festival of 1981 was "Mozartiana," a ballet in which Balanchine invented himself yet again to Tchaikovsky's inventions of Mozart's inventions of Gluck. Don't look at *my* Tchaikovsky, Balanchine seemed to be telling his disciples; don't look at *my* Mozart (which in any case is so transparent as to be invisible)—look into the music. Look into Stravinsky and see the many places he's been, the times he's known; this is how an artist works.



Gordon Boelzner, the company's music director, must be credited for the care taken with the musical performance of the project scores; for the most difficult ones, guest artists were engaged. But why hadn't Martins been mindful of his charges' lapses? Why had he permitted so many overlong pieces, so much repetitious and stereotypical use of Albert Evans and other key dancers? The project's first night, a downer all the way, was typical of current N.Y.C.B. programming trends, putting the emphasis on similarity rather than on diversity. Ballets in black leotards with blackish lighting, ballets to string music, ballets with wild redheads in them are placed together, until it's no wonder that samenesses start pounding, pounding in our brain. Mercifully for the Diamond Project choreographers, their ballets were separated after their premières and put into regular repertory. But this means that they will now be seen next to one of those pace-setting formulaic ballets by Martins or (heaven help them!) one of Balanchine's.

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE, in its second year under new management, is soldiering on with not a lot to show for its determination to survive.

The new director, Kevin McKenzie, brings gifted young dancers forward much faster than N.Y.C.B. does, but there's much less for them to do when they reach the top. The revised "Nutcracker" is full of ideas that don't work, such as having the heroine go on point and dance the Sugar Plum variation. What with Sugar Plum herself and a Snow Queen and a Dew Drop, that makes four ballerinas competing for the audience's attention. (An unhappy six-year-old behind me kept moaning, "Where's Sugar Plum?")

Actually, revisions or no, this production looks a lot like the old one, produced by Baryshnikov. The choreographer, McKenzie, adapts or complicates just about every feature that was there before, and the designer, Paul Kelly, sticks a rosette onto every result, but you still wonder why they call it a new production. You may also wonder why Wendy Wasserstein gets credit for the libretto. We may have reached the point where nothing can be new in ballet. What I have been saying about the Diamond Project is also true of the new James Kudelka ballet, "Cruel World," presented by A.B.T. It's overlong, it's kinetically overdriven by the music (Tchaikovsky's "Souvenir de Florence") but not shaped by the music, and it's thematically incoherent. The lack of discipline in Kudelka's work is particularly distressing; he strikes me as a dreamer. Just when you think his dancers are not Dancers but Men and Women, he starts stressing misterioso moments, like the men bending over and pressing on the floor. (This hand-to-floor ritual occurred in several of the season's ballets. In Laerkesen's, the male lead put his *ear* to the floor.) Discipline comes from within the work; its rules are revealed to the artist, not imposed. But the artist's discipline, in choreography as in everything else, is no longer necessary for success. We don't have art anymore; we have art products. We don't have artists; we have art stars. The classical approach—nothing can be new that is not discovered in, invented from, the old—is meaningless to a generation that doesn't know what old is. Total retrieval is at our fingertips; the sights and sounds of the past thirty years blend with the present and fill the electronic circuitry that we use to amuse ourselves. Ballets that could be relied on to die and be renewed over the course of time are artificially alive on tape, aborting the function of memory. Choreographers, who were supposed to provide novelty, have run out of things to say. Except at N.Y.C.B., everything now is in the hands of set designers.

This is certainly the case with the Royal Ballet's current version of "The Sleeping Beauty," which had its première in April in Washington, D.C., and is now at the Met. Anthony Dowell's staging retains interpolations by Kenneth MacMillan and Frederick Ashton and is free of the kind of inspiration that cheapened British productions in the recent past, such as the depiction of the Lilac Fairy and Carabosse as equal forces duelling down to the wire for the life of Aurora. But this minimally decent conception comes equipped with the most eccentric décor the company has ever provided for the ballet. The artist is Maria Bjørnson, who designed the show "Phantom of the Opera"; her fixation here might be described as Neo-Baroque Expressionism. The Prologue is all tilting columns and tall windows in forced perspective, dragging the eye toward an oval cupola in the ceiling. A long Miss Havisham table is lined with chairs that start rocking with Carabosse's entrance. The table has no purpose other than to let the baleful creature emerge from underneath it. The chairs are never occupied, but they return in the Wedding scene, reupholstered in blue silk moiré. (How clever of the Queen to have found an interior decorator in time.) For some reason, the backdrop in this act is a pastiche of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's 1816 décor for "The Magic Flute"—gold stars in rows against deep-blue sky—but with a big black oval gash in the center. Again, the perspective is forced, as if we were lying on our backs looking up at the ceiling. Oval frames dominate every act, requiring dancers to enter, as it were, through the ceiling. (Dowell's "Swan Lake," designed by Yolanda Sonnabend and seen here in 1991, also had an obsession with ovals.) In the hunt, which takes place on ice, the oval is partly filled with what looks like hoarfrost. Panorama: an iceboat moves across the stage behind the frame. Ice mist, snow, icicles. Aurora (pun?) borealis effect. All this while the music is dreaming of winding rivers, soft forest murmurs, and the scent of lilac.

The costumes, whether for eighteenth-century courtiers, Regency dandies, or fairies from no known planet, are

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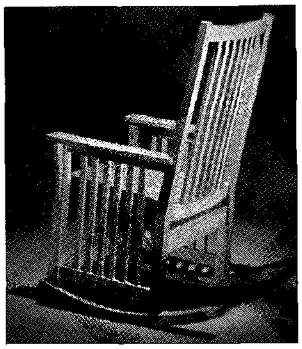

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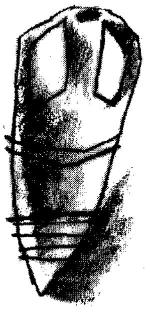
extremely precious, unpalatably so in the third act, where they clash with the simplicity of the Schinkel set. This is the sixth or seventh production of "The Sleeping Beauty" by the Royal Ballet, not counting periodic revisions of standing productions, and it is the first to place the emphasis squarely on visual values. Music, dancing, mime are all recessive components of what used to be the grandest dance spectacle in the world.



The most bizarre art product of the season was "The Red Shoes," the ballet that was rescued from the sunken hulk of the Broadway show based on the movie. Drama critics reviewing the show pronounced Lar Lubovitch's choreography its only redeeming feature, a judgment with which dance critics weren't given a chance to concur before A.B.T. snapped up the ballet for its spring engagement at the Met. In the meantime, New York City Ballet had signed up the star of the show, the Canadian dancer Margaret Illmann, so "The Red Shoes" went on at A.B.T. without her. The whole episode, together with the Bjørnson version of "The Sleeping Beauty," suggested a new symbiosis at work between ballet and Broadway. Ballet *isn't* like Broadway; it's just enough like it to be hospitable to the same weird impulses that have reconstituted the musical, and enough unlike it to dignify those impulses, context redefining content according to the old sixties thesis, which Allan Kaprow explained by saying, "A cow in a concert hall is a musician; a cow in a barn is a cow." I'm not objecting to the thesis; professionalism is as much at home in ballet as on Broadway and can effect the most amazing transfers. But this doesn't apply to Bjørnson's notion of "The Sleeping Beauty"; even less does it apply to Lar Lubovitch's Broadway choreography. "The Red Shoes" at the Met is a cow.

Illmann's three guest appearances were part of another new trend at N.Y.C.B.; when Balanchine took in outsiders, they generally ended up joining the company. Illmann, like Darcey Bussell, who was a guest last winter, may have sold a few tickets, but she wasn't up to the requirements of Balanchine choreography. Bussell had the strength that Illmann lacked. In the "Agon" pas de deux and in the great second movement of the Bizet "Symphony in C," she deployed powerful limbs to sometimes impressive effect. But the stop-and-go phrasing, the lack of sculptural tension suggested that she'd learned the choreography from videotape. (And her performance in "Agon" is now *on* videotape to instruct a whole new generation.) It's interesting to compare Bussell in Bizet with a comparably endowed dancer, Nina Ananiashvili, who appeared as a guest in the same role in 1988. The British dancer could have been dancing "Swan Lake," whereas the Russian dancer tried to fulfill the stylistic demands of the role and succeeded to an admirable degree. But that was before the company went into its current steep decline. Even if we assume a willingness to learn on Bussell's part, a company that has lost control of its own style is in no position to teach a guest.

In place of a collective style, N.Y.C.B. dancers offer individual estimates of style. Here and there, now and then, we may think we see the hallmark of authenticity up on the stage, but it's only someone's opinion, and it's sure to be contradicted before the night is over. LaFosse's way of embedding the step in the musical phrase is contradicted by the mass of Diamond Project choreography, and his ballet is too light to counter the vacuumatic formalism that is now the company's reigning aesthetic. Under the terms of this aesthetic, the only measure of distinction in choreography is degree of difficulty. If you make it really hard on the dancers, you are said to be challenging them. In the Harder Is Better sweepstakes, Martins and Tanner led the field, a bad omen for any N.Y.C.B. dancers still hoping to tell a challenge from a dare.

STUDENTS of the School of American Ballet acquire a good foundation of style. Then, when they are taken into New York City Ballet, they may spend years in the corps, waiting for aging principal dancers to vacate roles. This grim prospect blunts the pleasure one might take in the emergence, season after season, of excellent dancers from the school. They are trained to give meticulous performances of Balanchine far above the company norm. When they finally get an important role, they are weak from having done nothing but corps work, and probably overweight and depressed, too. The demands of the role, which they fear they now can't meet, depress them more. So they work themselves too hard and get injured. It takes unparalleled strength and stamina to dance the major roles of the Balanchine repertory; that's why Balanchine pushed kids so hard in class. It's why he promoted them as soon as, or sooner than, they were ready.

The school is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary. Fittingly, in its annual spring workshop performances, it danced "Serenade," which it had danced for the first time in 1934. This year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of "Dances at a Gathering." The Jerome Robbins ballet, one of the two or three greatest hits that N.Y.C.B. has ever had, is still in repertory, suffering as much as any Balanchine ballet from the company's deterioration. It was at the end of "Dances at a Gathering" that Edward Villella leaned over and pressed his hand to hallowed ground, but what today's choreographers who incorporate this gesture mean by it is anyone's guess. Robbins, who resigned in 1989, returned this season—not to the company but (rather pointedly, some thought) to the school, contributing a première to the workshop program, which, besides "Serenade," included "The Flower Festival in Genzano" and "Western Symphony." The new ballet, to the Bach music that seems to be absorbing him of late, is called "Two and Three Part Inventions," and it is just that, a rediscovery of Bach arranged for a cast of eight, the girls in white leotards and overskirts, and the boys in white T-shirts and blue tights—the white-and-blue of the S.A.B. studios in pre-Lincoln Center days. Robbins evoked those studios once before, in his "Afternoon of a Faun." The new Bach work is, if you like, a continuation of his ballets about dancers, but this spring the disasters piling up across the plaza made it seem to be about dance in a holistic sense—as an institution and a ritual. A few years ago, the ballet school of the Paris Opera visited New York, and we saw young students beautifully trained and blessedly free of the vices that marked the parent company's performing style. The same division is now widening between the School of American Ballet and New York City Ballet. Perhaps this is why dancers keep feeling the ground: it's shaking beneath their feet. ♦

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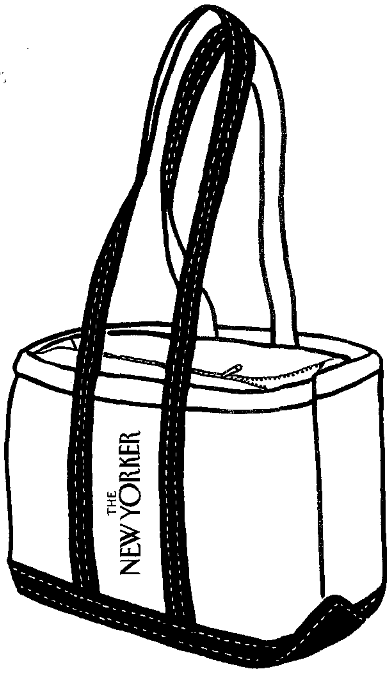

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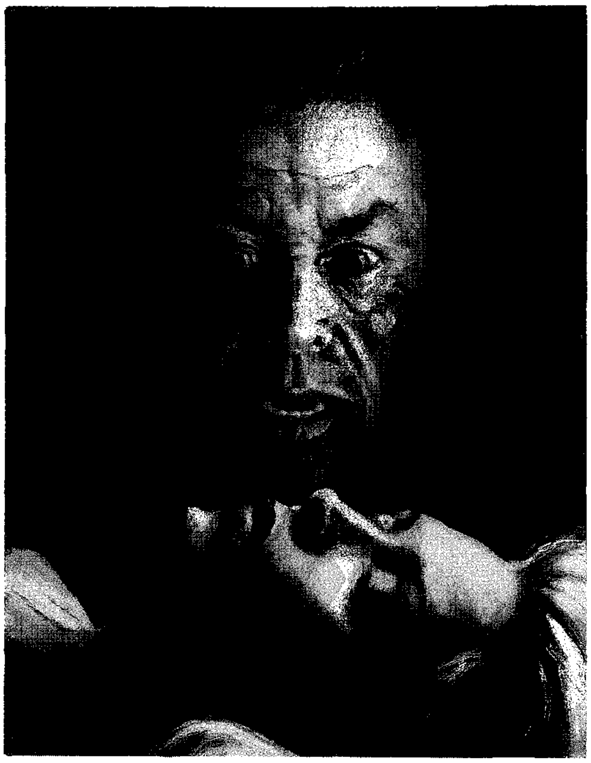
THE CURRENT CINEMA

HOWL

BY ANTHONY LANE

MOONLIGHT in Vermont, and the snow is gusting lightly across the road. Will Randall, the senior editor at an old-fashioned New York publishing house, has been visiting with an author and is now heading home. But the night is not yet through with him. There's a wolf in the way. He drives straight into it, then walks over to inspect the body. The wolf opens one cunning yellow eye, bites him on the hand, and runs off. The damage is done; from now on, to the accompaniment of bristling hairs and a growing taste for blood, the mild-mannered Will Randall is destined to change, inexorably and horrifyingly, into Jack Nicholson.

Written by Wesley Strick and Jim Harrison and directed by Mike Nichols, "Wolf" works far better as a literate black comedy than as a horror movie. For half an hour or so, it hits a beautiful balance; audiences may well have forgotten the joys to be had from this brand of sophisticated confection, rich and dark, laced with bitter little jokes. The environment through which Will Randall moves is clubbable and low-key, a place of polished wood and wrought-iron elevator cages—constructed for the safety of a gentleman, that is, not for the isolation of a beast. Will dresses like a professor, and the patter that bounces around his office is as entertaining as anything in the film. This is no accident: if you cast Eileen Atkins as a secretary, it means you want your dialogue, however light, to punch its weight. And David Hyde Pierce does a fine turn as Will's devoted assistant, Roy. "Are you sick?" he asks. "A wolf bit me." Roy shrugs. "I just asked," he says. It's hard to pin down the pleasure of moments like these, but there's a thirties touch about them; the characters are defined by their instinctive feel for one another's moods, and this gives them a rare chance to underreact. Feelings are there to play with, not to pour out.


"Wolf" is like a one-movie retrospective of Jack Nicholson's schizoid career.

TOM OKAMURA

Also in the offing is Stewart (James Spader), the young blood of the company, who, like Roy, professes undying loyalty to Will. Whether he means it is another matter. This is Spader's best movie to date; fresh-faced and soft-spoken, he has always been a weirdly smooth actor, a sort of yuppie Peter Lorre, and now he plunges the charm in up to the hilt, offering discreet but unarguable proof that Uriah Heep is alive and well and working in Manhattan. Stewart is in league with Raymond Alden (Christopher Plummer), another creep with oil in his veins, who owns the publishing company and would probably acquire the rest of the planet if he could only find time. One evening, at a low-lit reception, Alden goes for a walk with Will, fires him, and replaces him with Stewart. The old Will would have taken this lying down; the new one gives it some thought, then decides to take it on all fours with a howl of disagreement and a tongue dripping foam.

"Wolf" may be the first movie to merge lycanthropy and capitalism into a joint venture, but the novelty is rather too much for it, and the argument grows strained. To begin with, the bite of the wolf seems to enhance all that is decent and uncorrupted in Will, all that has yet to be sullied by the encroachments of modern life. This sounds promising, if a bit Robert Bly-ish, but it soon makes way for a more obvious image: the corporate wolf. Will outwits the fiendish Stewart with some devilry of his own, and joins Alden as another slavering boardroom carnivore. To compound the confusion, he goes to get advice from a cliché—from an old Indian sage, to be exact, who tells him that "life is mystical," that the wolf itself is not evil, and that "not all who are bitten change—there must be something wild within." Just for a second, I fancied that I heard the frantic hedging of bets. Shortly afterward, Will wanders through Central Park and mauls a mugger: an unforgivable scene, implying that with a dash more animal courage America could repel the advance of disorder—white wolves versus urban blacks.

"Wolf" is a broken-backed, ill-fitting piece of work, which only makes sense—only comes together, really—in the person of its star. This is not a great performance by Nicholson, but it's courageous and astute, because it forces into the open all the tensions that keep him wired and insure his potency as a star: his "agreeable and affable personality, his acute intelligence and his nice-mindedness on the one hand, and his completely unbridled instinctual life on the other." The words come from the conclusion to Freud's "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," otherwise known as "The Case of the Wolf-Man." Will Randall is the part that Jack was born to play. Freud calls the wolf an "anxiety-animal," one of many hide-outs for a wandering phobia—just the kind of casual, unforced symbol in which cinema (a hopeless medium for confronting psychoanalysis head-on) can usefully trade. High-class performers tend to sneer at the monster movie, but it's their loss; as Boris Karloff discovered, there are terrible stores of pathos and frustration to be released. Surely, this is Nicholson territory, too; think of the inward turnings and lashes of rage, the hobo lyricism of "Five Easy Pieces," or the stony control of his Eugene O'Neill in "Reds." He was a wolf man long before this picture was ever conceived.

It's come only just in time. In recent years, Nicholson connoisseurs have watched in dismay as he has eased himself into a series of chuckling, expansive, shit-eating parts, from "The Shining" to "The Witches of Eastwick" and "Batman." If ham is what you want, of course, it doesn't come saltier than Jack; the grin is intact, and getting wider by the week, but it's the grin of a Cheshire cat who got the cream. The emotional sinews, the bulk and stretch of his more troubled roles, seem to have vanished from view. His Joker, in "Batman," was delicious vaudeville, but it paid him millions and cost him nothing, whereas his McMurphy, in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," displaying a sanity so untrammelled that it had to be locked up, took all his wit and strength. The young Nicholson looked badly displeased with the world, and the pain of it led him into muss-haired madness; the older man looks pleased with himself. He's flying nowhere; he's sitting right there in the cuckoo's nest.

"Wolf" is like a one-movie retrospective of this schizoid career. It shows the relaxed pro turning into Jack the lad, although neither phase is free of the other. Even in the opening scene, with his features grimacing through the windshield, he strikes you as suspiciously feral, just as Jeff Goldblum clearly looked bug-eyed and jumpy at the beginning of "The Fly." It's asking a lot of Nicholson that he should grow younger as the movie proceeds, and I didn't quite fall for his ability to outrun a forest fawn, but it's easy to believe that something is stirring in his lupine loins. Any other actor would have waited until the plot gave him license to get horny. Nicholson starts early, when he's still sighing and sweaty and pooped. Who else would dare to suggest that it's sexy to be long in the tooth? He transfers his affections from his wife (Kate Nelligan, a wonderful actress wasted in a plaintive part) to Alden's rebellious daughter, Laura (Michelle Pfeiffer). "What are you, the last civilized man?" she asks when they meet. It's a great line, facing two ways, both of them arousing: either a compliment or a taunt to bring his dirty appetites out of the undergrowth. "Old guy, huh?" she says. "Yeah. Old guy," he admits. This sounds like a declaration of amity, almost of indifference; in truth, it's more like Kim Novak encountering the graying Jimmy Stewart in "Vertigo"—a first hint that the oddest couples can sometimes take the plunge.

But "Wolf" is all hints; once they develop into plots, the fire goes out of them. The love story, too wimpish to be intense, is not helped by the sight of Will and Laura bonding gently in front of a lake at sunset; and the sex, so heavily prepared for, simply fails to happen. Will uses his teeth to tug at the cord of his wife's robe; his new admirer finds him alone in a hotel bedroom with a pair of police handcuffs. Let's face it, the guy can sniff out stray hormones from two valleys away, but what do we get? One of those paltry postcoital scenes where the camera picks its way demurely through a trail of discarded socks and silks. How can Mike Nichols, the maker of "Carnal Knowledge," fob us off with this kind of carnal innocence? How can he take on a movie about the transmission of subhuman lusts, get his leading lovers together, and then fade from view like a footman? The strongest sexual current in the whole film flows across a kitchen table, where Will tells Laura that, beneath her beauty, she's not a very interesting person, merely sullen and withdrawn. It's an extraordinary speech—rude, true, and hurtfully seductive, the most naked dose of Nicholson since that time in "Carnal Knowledge" when he snarled his way through a slide show of old girlfriends. Pfeiffer's character—and her otherwise controlled performance—never really recovers from this broadside. The last civilized man is a bastard.

The climax of "Wolf" is supposed to be exciting, the fruition of all these violent, unhealthy passions, as the wolf within Will starts to go whole hog. In fact, it's the most boring sequence in the movie. I was waiting for some juicy transformation scene, and was surprised to see him sporting nothing worse than a set of flourishing side-whiskers. The movie sets off in bookish style, but does it really have to climax with our hero taking on the appearance of Matthew Arnold? The special-effects master is Rick Baker, who did such astonishing work on "An American Werewolf in London," scraping our senses with the creak of burgeoning bones and the rustle of fresh pelt; I remember my jaw dropping as the hero's grew. But his effects in "Wolf" aren't half as cool; give me ten minutes in front of a mirror with a handful of cheek wadding, some amber contact lenses, and a strip of hairy doormat taped to each side of my face, and I, too, can look like a creature of the night.

It's not Baker's fault; Mike Nichols doesn't have the same spirited, pop take on the genre as John Landis, and he probably thinks himself above schlock tricks, although what he puts in their place is much worse. From "The Graduate" onward, he has relished the spectacle of Americans at one another's throats, but this is the first time that he has introduced sharp teeth and long claws into the process, and it's not really his field. He can't summon the tones for it; the interiors of the movie are warm and dangerous, but the outside scenes come across as plastic and false. The glades through which Will first scampers by night are not wild at all; they're a rich man's pleasure park—the grounds of Alden's estate. Even the passing of a werewolf causes no commotion, for Nichols, confronted by bodies that move fast, tranquillizes them with slow motion. Will hunting prey, Will scrapping to the death with a rival, Will pushed down onto a bed: all this takes place in a dozy, largo dream. "The Animal Is Out," say the posters for this movie, but the truth is more worrying still. Jack Nicholson bares his fangs and fights to break free, but the movie won't run with him; the animal is safe in its cage. ◆

The PASS model suggests a multidimensional view of cognitive processes and consists of four major functions: planning, attention, and information processing.
—Adv. flyer from Allyn & Bacon, Spring, 1994.

But its memory bank is a little shaky.

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STRANGE INTERLUDE

BY SELINA HASTINGS

Loving Garbo
by Hugo Vickers
(Random House; $25)

If ever two people deserved each other, they were Greta Garbo and Cecil Beaton. During the course of their dismally inadequate love affair, they rarely made each other happy, but for a time each provided something the other wanted. It suited the emotionally costive Garbo to be courted by a man too superficial to be taken seriously, while Beaton, snob and self-promoter, was thrilled to be known as the lover of the world-famous star. The affair, if such it can be called, took place in a desultory manner over a decade and a half, mainly during Beaton's semi-annual visits to New York. The pair would go shopping together, walk in Central Park, sometimes discreetly visit a restaurant, with Garbo praying that they would not be spotted and Beaton fervently hoping that they would. Now and again, there was an afternoon's lovemaking in a hotel bedroom.

Although the story itself is slight, it sheds some new and revealing light on the two participants. Hugo Vickers, who published a six-hundred-page life of Cecil Beaton in 1985, has written a detailed and sympathetic account of the relationship, and has uncovered an impressive amount of new or long-forgotten material. Following closely on the heels of his book is Diana Souhami's "Greta and Cecil," to be published by Harper San Francisco this fall. The two books cover essentially the same ground, though Vickers' loyalty is primarily to Beaton, while Souhami is especially good on Garbo's character and habits. A careful scanning of the acknowledgments in both manuscripts gives an impression of backstage shenanigans. Vickers, who is one of Beaton's literary executors, apparently delayed for two years before giving Souhami permission to quote from Beaton's papers. He himself was refused permission by Garbo's niece to quote from Garbo's letters. Reading his faithful paraphrases, one wonders if that is such a loss. In 1951, "[Garbo] wrote to Cecil, telling him that she had been going through a sad time. . . . She herself still had a cold, now into its sixth month. She urged Cecil not to get overtired, told him that she thought of him often, and invited him to send her a list of any pains from which he was suffering, so that they could compare notes." A little later, Greta writes to him while on vacation: "The only impression she had of Bermuda was the view from her terrace. It was humid, she complained, there was no shortage of rain, and her trousers clung to her legs."

From the very beginning, it was Beaton who made the running. As a newly fashionable photographer of English society beauties, he first visited Hollywood in 1929, his avowed ambition to meet and photograph the great Garbo. "Not a chance," he was told by the director of publicity at M-G-M. "Hell. Damn. Blast the bitch," Beaton wrote in his diary (a source to which Vickers refers frequently and to great effect). "I almost wept with fury, exhaustion, pique." Three years later, and considerably calmer, he was in Hollywood again, staying with friends. One afternoon, he pranced into the living room and there she was, drinking a cocktail and chatting with his hosts. Cecil had dressed with particular care that day—white kid jacket, white snakeskin shorts, white socks and shoes—and Garbo, no doubt struck by this vision of English manhood, playfully took a rose from a vase and gave it to him. Beaton carried the rose back to England, framed it and hung it above his bed. Fourteen years passed before he saw her again—at a party in New York given by Margaret Case, the society editor for *Vogue*. The sudden sight of Garbo nearly knocked Beaton backward—he had to grab onto a chair for support. This time, Beaton made sure that the elusive diva would not escape him, charming her so effectively that she soon visited him in his rooms at the Plaza.

THE WEEKEND
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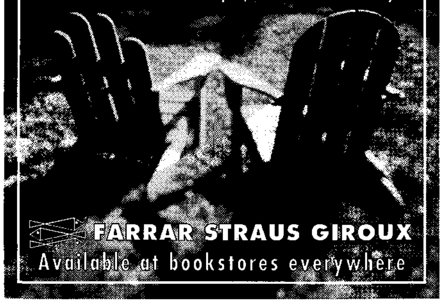

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The friendship prospered—so quickly that Beaton proposed marriage on their third encounter. According to Vickers, Garbo's reply was equivocal. Undeterred, Beaton wrote home about marriage plans and, once back in England, began boasting about his conquest, convinced that he, Cecil Beaton, was within an ace of possessing the greatest screen goddess of the age. Then came a reversal: Garbo had asked Beaton to take her passport photograph for a trip to Sweden, and Beaton had sold the results to *Vogue*, claiming that Garbo had given him permission to do so. Garbo—whose passion for privacy extended up to and beyond the borders of paranoia—was enraged. She refused to speak to him, to reply to his increasingly grovelling letters, or to accept his frequent transatlantic telephone calls. But in the end she relented, and the relationship resumed as before—Beaton soppy with infatuation, Garbo whimsical and detached.

WHAT was it that they had for each other? Both were childish, both emotionally immature. Garbo, with few inner resources, needed to be kept amused; she liked to have an entertaining companion escort her while she shopped for face cream or organically grown vegetables. Beaton, for his part, suffered from insecurities unguessed at by his more conventional acquaintances—insecurities comfortingly diminished by friendship with a famous woman. As late as 1966, he wrote about his homosexuality, "Even now I can only vaguely realize that it was only comparatively late in life that I would go into a room full of people without a feeling of guilt. To go into a room full of men, or to a lavatory in the Savoy, needed quite an effort."

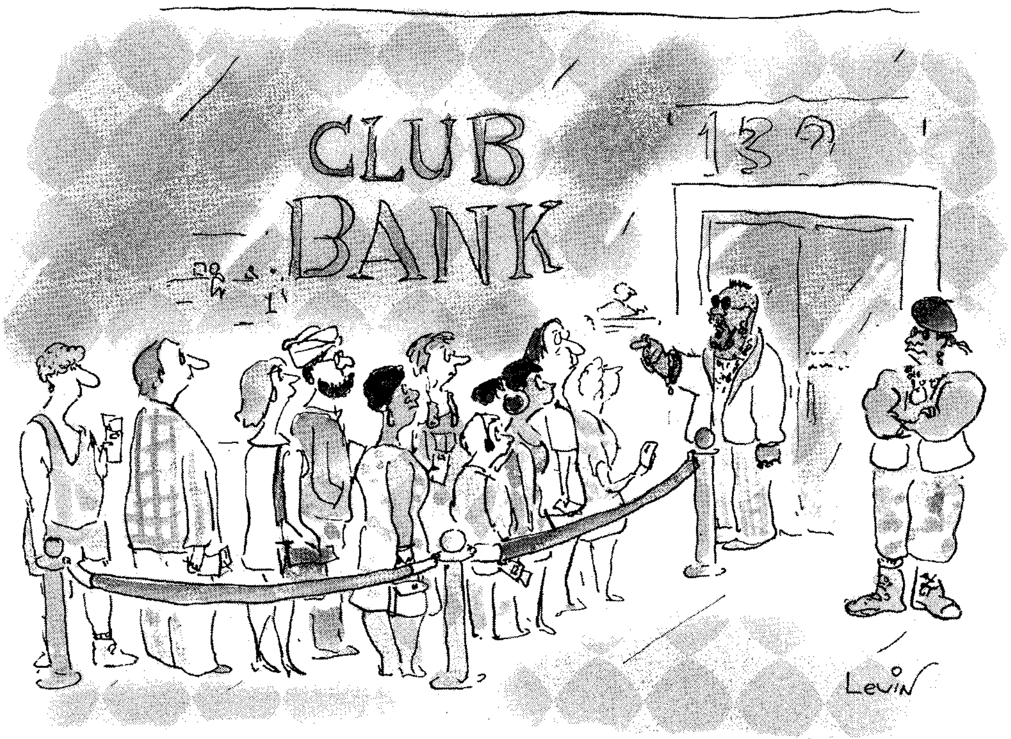
From earliest boyhood, Beaton had been fascinated by feminine beauty. At Cambridge, he frequently dressed up in women's clothes, once attending an undergraduate party in pink chiffon and a bustle. Although his sexual taste was predominantly for men, Beaton adored the company of stylish women, and he had several brief affairs, with, among others, Adele Astaire, Viscountess Castlerosse, and the actress Coral Browne. Garbo, naturally, was the peak of Beaton's ambition: the most beautiful woman in the world, and the most famous—with the added appeal of her strangely androgynous nature.

Alone together: Garbo visiting Beaton in England, for the first time, in 1951—four years after their affair began.

Garbo's image had always been sexually ambiguous. Indifferent to fashion, she preferred trousers and flat, sensible shoes; she used little makeup and, unlike other women in those days of toast-rack perms, wore her thick hair straight to the shoulder. She had had homosexual affairs, like Beaton, and would provocatively refer to herself as a young man—an affectation that Beaton in his letters adopted with relish. "Dear Youth," he wrote to her, "Have you yet learnt how to use a razor? . . . Have you got to the age when you wear long pants & a dinner jacket in the evening? Has your voice started to break yet?" Beaton was obviously excited by her boyish air, while she evidently found his effeminate dandyism attractive—although she rebuked him for the pansy manner in which he "draped" himself, and the way he stood, hand on hip, when using the telephone.

One of Garbo's lesbian lovers was Mercedes de Acosta, in her day notorious in Hollywood for having had affairs in quick succession with the two reigning deities, Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. In the course of his zealous researches, Vickers disinterred some intriguing material about this female Errol Flynn. Handsome and sexually voracious, Mercedes adopted a bandit swagger that caused a *frisson* among the ladies. According to Truman Capote, who invented a game he called International Daisy Chain, in which people were linked through their sexual contacts, Mercedes de Acosta was the best card to hold. As John Richardson explained it to Vickers, with her card, "You could get to anyone—from Cardinal Spellman to the Duchess of Windsor."

Mercedes saw herself as a dashing adventurer: she dressed only in black and white, wrote reams of dreadful poetry, and swallowed wholesale all the then fashionable hokum of astrology, astral travel, and other paranormal phenomena. Mercedes had a husband, whom she largely ignored. Her affair with Garbo took place in 1931. The two women spent several weeks together in a log cabin beside a lake in the Sierra Nevada, and soon afterward Garbo moved into Mercedes's house. But she quickly moved out again, going off to Sweden



"Remember, deposit only—you, you, you!"

• •

for a holiday, and, in spite of Mercedes's eager attempts to reinstate herself, that was more or less that. Mercedes, however, was not left long to repine. Within days of Garbo's departure, she had been targeted by Dietrich, and for nine months she enjoyed a passionate and stagy relationship with her. Mercedes more or less fades out of Garbo's story, returning only briefly, in 1960, with a dire volume of memoirs, "Here Lies the Heart," in which she gives a self-dramatizing account of her friendship with the star—a betrayal for which she was never forgiven. Beaton met Mercedes a few times, and was envious at first of her vaunted intimacy with his inamorata, but soon he regarded her with pity, and at the end of Mercedes's life tried to persuade Garbo to relent and get in touch with her old friend dying in New York. Garbo refused.

Vickers does his best to present Mercedes as an exotic fascinator with a crucial role in Garbo's life, but in fact she comes across as a bore and a charlatan. His energies might have been better spent in a more thorough investigation of the truly mysterious and influential Georges Schlee, whom Garbo met in 1941, and who for more than twenty years was her Svengali, acting as both business adviser and social escort, and dividing his time equally between Garbo and his wife, the dress designer Valentina. Garbo even moved into an apartment five floors below the Schlees, so that Schlee could more easily maintain his eccentric version of a ménage à trois. Beaton was furiously jealous of him; he described Schlee, who was Russian-born, as a "Road Company Rasputin," and for years accepted Garbo's carefully calculated assurances that she was obliged to do as Schlee said because he controlled her investments. But one evening Beaton caught sight of the two in the back of a car: "They seemed so very much interested in one another & Greta looking at him with a smile of affection & his head quite close to hers." The exact nature of Schlee's hold over Garbo is never revealed, presumably because Vickers did not have access to Schlee's papers. "History does not answer this question," Vickers says. He suggests that sex was not the basis of the relationship.

As for Beaton and Garbo, it was in November of 1947, in Beaton's suite at the Plaza, that they finally became lovers. "Suddenly as if it were the most ordinary question in the world she stretched out her arm towards the other room and asked with disarming and natural frankness, 'Do you want to go to bed?' " Beaton recorded in his diary. He was flattered when she told him later that "as a result of my last embraces she was now in too delicate a state to allow herself to be further abused," and that he "had behaved like a boor." Soon afterward, he went to stay with her in California, where they again made love. As Beaton described the event, "I felt very happy and pleased with myself and great satisfaction for my prowess as a lover." This apart, few concessions were made to Beaton's status as guest; his hostess spent most of her time energetically at work in her garden.

In spite of this bleak form of hospitality, Vickers reports, Beaton's ardor remained undimmed. He wanted to marry Garbo, and to this end it was essential that she should visit him in England, stay in his house, meet his friends. But Garbo was annoyingly noncommittal. It was a lovely idea: she might come; on the other hand, she might not. Once, in the summer of 1947, she suddenly arrived in London—but not to see Beaton. In a frenzy of expectation, he sat by the telephone in his elegant little town house in Pelham Place, not daring to have fish cooked for his luncheon, in case it made the rooms smell. The call never came, and it was not until four years later that his invitation was accepted.

Beaton also had a ravishing Queen Anne house at Broadchalke, near Salisbury, and it was here, in Octob[illegible] of 1951, that he finally brought his prize. For nearly two months, Beaton had Garbo to himself. He gloated and glowed, guarding her like a tiger, showing her off to carefully selected acquaintances, not all of whom were sufficiently conscious of the honor. Beaton's mother, for instance, was overtly hostile, and his two sisters were little better. Worse, the local grandee, the Marquess of Bath, entirely failed to recognize Beaton's visiting Swede ("It's Garbo, you clot!"), and the writer James Pope-Hennessy, initially fascinated, was soon complaining of boredom. He wrote to a friend, "It gradually dawns on one that she is entirely uneducated, interested in theosophy, dieting and all other cranky subjects, has conversation so dull that you could scream."

In his heart of hearts, Beaton was relieved when Garbo left. The task of providing constant entertainment for her was tedious, and when he did persuade her to make an expedition she was indifferent to all but her own immediate comfort. Vickers notes, "When they drove in the car together, she first complained that it was too hot and airless, then minutes later that she was about to catch a cold. Then she found the contradiction amusing."

Garbo returned to New York, and three weeks later Beaton himself crossed the Atlantic, expecting an affectionate welcome. On telephoning her apartment, he was shocked to be told by the switchboard operator that "Miss Garbo don't answer." Garbo had come across a disobliging paragraph he had written about her nearly twenty years before, and the portcullis was down. This time, Beaton refused to feel contrite: how could she hold against him something written so long ago, before they had even met? When she finally agreed to talk to him, relations deteriorated further, with her accusation that he was flippant. "Flippant? The fat was in the fire! I suddenly felt myself roused to fury." The more he brooded, the more injured he felt, eventually working himself up to write her a harsh letter of rebuke.

The relationship never fully recovered, and from then on the onetime lovers met only infrequently. When Beaton was in New York in 1956, supervising his designs for "My Fair Lady," he wrote to a friend, "I've seen Greta at inervals only because I've been so busy & oo busy to put up with her continued nonsense of saying no to everything including Life." When she came to England again, in 1960, Beaton was chilled by her self-absorption and triviality. He wrote in his diary:

> I found the journey back to London from Salisbury] rather over-tiring. Greta ever reads, & in any case had not brought er glasses so could only glance at the headlines of the newspaper I gave her. She felt somewhat put out that there were other people in the compartment. . . . She kept up an incessant battery of questions. 'Where could I get a carpet that is pink? If only I could get some painted furniture.' Each suggestion I make is hopeless for I know that she will never go to these shops, or if she does she will never buy anything, or if she does she will not know where to put it.

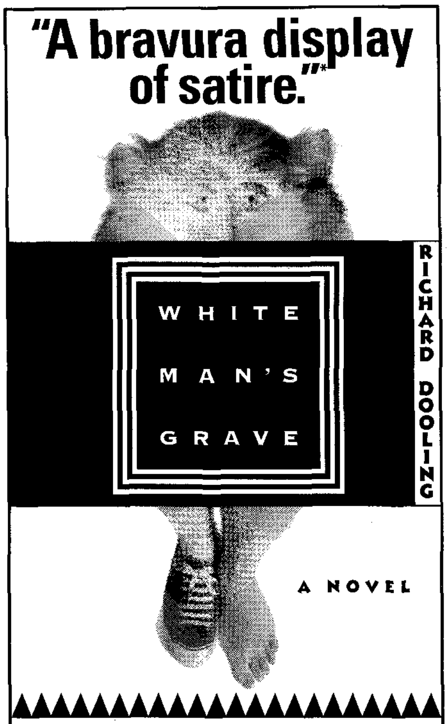
It was the same when they were together in company:

> We talked of movies of today—Greta silent. She did not even know that Jeanne Moreau had made a film of Mata Hari. She had never heard of Antonioni, Fellini, Richardson, or the like. She remained stubbornly silent while the pros & cons of Dietrich were discussed. She took no part in an explanation of expressionist painting.

Pointedly, Beaton continued in his diary, "Poor old Marlene Dietrich, with her dye & face lift & new career as singer—with all her nonsense—is a live & vital person. . . . That is much preferable to this other non-giving, non-living phantom of the past."

Beaton had put his finger on it: Garbo had outlived her legend, and now all that survived was a pathetic remnant. In her heyday, as Vickers shows in this meticulous account, Beaton had loved the press attention she shunned, loved the excited, envious gossip among his friends, worshipped her peerless beauty. As the beauty deteriorated with age, he found himself less able to tolerate the character flaws that accompanied it. On a cruise among the Greek islands in 1965 he studied Garbo's face mercilessly in the harsh sunlight, noting that "one sees every crinkle and crevice in the most cruel way." He had clearly fallen out of love by then, which no doubt made it easier to betray her when, in 1971, he published an account of their affair in the third volume of his diaries, "The Happy Years." At that time, he calculated that he had made at least four thousand pounds through his friendship with the star.

It is an unedifying story, and difficult not to feel exasperation with the silly pair—Beaton with his vanity and ambition, Garbo with her all-consuming solipsism. It is Beaton who emerges as the more genuinely affectionate, and yet it was he who turned traitor. Over the years of his relationship with this most



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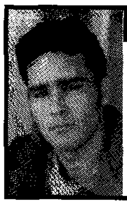

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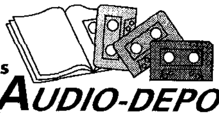

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private of women, he relentlessly noted her every word and gesture in his diary and kept copies of his side of their correspondence, knowing full well that one day he would publish it. And yet there is an undeniable pathos on both sides. Garbo—lonely, ungenerous, and self-obsessed—had been literally disabled by her terrible fame. There was never any doubt that Garbo was unique, with her pale, lunar beauty and her unerring instinct for the camera. The screenwriters Salka and Berthold Viertel, who knew her well, described her, in a memoir written years later, as a patient, appreciative and considerate colleague. "She seemed hypersensitive," Salka wrote, "although of a steely resilience. . . . 'Probably all that fame prevents her from living her real life,' I said. 'It's a high price to pay,' said Berthold."

It *was* a high price. Although Garbo was intensely serious about her profession, she hated the trappings of the film industry, loathed the studio system, with its inhuman constraints, and suffered excruciatingly from homesickness. She always felt an exile, as though her permanent residence in the United States were a condign if bewildering punishment. Haunted by memories of early poverty, she felt compelled to continue working to earn more money. Her success shackled her to Hollywood; the greater her success, the more desperate her unhappiness. She stopped working in 1941, making a quiet but final departure from the studios after the universal derision that greeted the release of "Two-Faced Woman." She was only thirty-six. Fifty years of retirement followed, but they brought her little enjoyment, as she was by then too badly damaged to recover.

Now Garbo was rich, but she never took pleasure in the wealth that, with careful investment, had enormously accumulated. Much of her time was spent in a couple of impersonal rooms, and she always went to bed early, occupying herself during the day with exercise, massage, and the pursuit of various homeopathic cures. Relationships meant little to her: she was ungenerous toward her friends and kept no personal mementos of any kind. But Garbo was Garbo, and she was never without a devoted little band willing to do what she wanted without expecting anything in return. She cultivated the company of the very rich—Eric Goldschmidt-Rothschild and Cécile de Rothschild, Aristotle Onassis, Countess Hörke Wachtmeister—not only for their sense of *douceur de vivre* but for the protection from public scrutiny which they could provide.

"I want to be alone," she is famously reported to have said. And the irony is that, pursued though she was—hunted by the press, lionized by the rich—alone she remained. She had lovers, and in later years there was the constant companionship of the enigmatic Georges Schlee, but nonetheless Garbo stayed solitary. The double irony is that Cecil Beaton, too, was alone. The agile social climber had hundreds of friends, but he came first with nobody. As a young man, he had fallen in love with Peter Watson, a rich dilettante and one of the founders of *Horizon*, the wartime literary journal edited by Cyril Connolly. But Watson found Beaton ludicrous, and caused him much anguish by his callous indifference. Other affairs followed, but it was always Beaton who pursued. When his mother died, in February of 1962, he wrote in his diary of his crushing loneliness.

When Schlee died, in 1964, Beaton could perhaps have stepped into his shoes, but by then even he had tired of Garbo's company, of her total lack of any aesthetic or intellectual interest, of her relentless self-referral. They did, however, continue to see each other from time to time. On one occasion, in New York, he arranged to meet her for lunch at La Caravelle. "She arrived distraught at being late. She should never have come out. 'Do you know this is the first time I've lunched out in I don't know how long?' ('What of it?' I felt like saying.)"

The last time Garbo and Beaton met was in 1975, four years after the publication of Beaton's diaries. They had not spoken during that time, but in 1974 Beaton had suffered a stroke. It was obvious he did not have long to live, and when Garbo went to England the following year, she was with difficulty persuaded to go to Broadchalke to see him. As Vickers vividly tells it, she was nervous on the journey down, and was visibly appalled at the sight of the senile old man who came staggering across the room to meet her. "Well, I couldn't have married him, could I?" Garbo commented to Beaton's secretary. "Him being like this!" As she prepared to leave, Beaton tottered forward, holding out his arms croaking, "Greta, the love of my life!" Desperately looking for escape, Garbo seized on the visitors' book, and, to avoid the embrace, broke one of he lifelong rules and signed her name Vickers writes, "She made sure sh never saw Cecil again." ♦

"I'm afraid we'll have to keep him overnight. Are you going to need a loaner?"

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

GENERAL

James Baldwin

by David Leeming

(Knopf; $25)

A WRITER of great autobiographical prose sometimes dooms his biographer. James Baldwin is a case in point. Whatever he may have thought of his life, whatever evasions of self he may have practiced, Baldwin's voice had a timbre and a kind of plunging rhythm to it that sounded like the gospel of truth: more profound, more harmonious than the real shape of the facts themselves. His life seemed to belong to his voice. In its absence, we have David Leeming, a professor of English at the University of Connecticut, who was a close friend of Baldwin's and served for several years as his assistant. Scrupulous, fair-minded—those are the words that describe this biography. But Leeming did not have the full coöperation of Baldwin's estate, and perhaps that is why the subject himself is strangely silent here; the reader doesn't discover any voice more informal or conversational than the one to be found in Baldwin's essays and novels. A great deal of trouble has been taken with the disposition of facts in this book, which is the first comprehensive biography of Baldwin, but somehow the man has got away, as have the time and the manner in which he lived.

Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the Islamic World

by Jan Goodwin

(Little, Brown; $22.95)

LIKE other well-meaning Westerners, Goodwin reminds us that the Koran nowhere supports the brutal treatment of women, and the educated Muslim women she quotes make this point as well. But then the author takes us on a tour of the Muslim world from Afghanistan to Egypt, talking to women (and a few men), and finds a list of horrors almost past belief. Rape is prevalent, and fear of rape is especially keen, because victims are often assumed to be guilty of adultery or fornication, for which they can be severely punished. Death threats close a girls' school in Afghanistan; genital mutilation is common in rural Egypt; in Jordan, a female journalist is accused of apostasy for openly criticizing the idea that women shouldn't be permitted to run for public office. Goodwin explains that fundamentalism is financed by oil-rich Arab states, whose rulers pay blackmail to terrorists in the hope of escaping revolution, as in Iran, or assassination, as in Egypt. And, although fundamentalism is alleged to appeal to the poor and uneducated, she finds that many rich, educated Muslim men routinely abuse their wives, sisters, and daughters in the belief that their religion permits—and in some instances commands—any method of domination, including murder.

The Spell of the Vienna Woods: Inspiration and Influence from Beethoven to Kafka

by Paul Hofmann

(Holt; $22.50)

AN indispensable book, a book to cherish. The Vienna Woods are some five hundred and forty square miles of rolling forestland that embraces and invades the city of Vienna. The author, a former *Times* correspondent who grew up just outside Vienna, takes us on a series of tours of lovely landscapes that hold traces of the prehistoric past and of Roman occupation, and recount the evolution of Christian Europe and its arts. Mayerling is in the Vienna Woods, as are Schönbrunn and other Hapsburg hangouts, but the accessibility of the woods also made them a playground for Viennese commoners from Johann Strauss to Freud. In 1802, Emanuel Schikaneder, the impresario who commissioned "The Magic Flute," built a house there, which was bought by Franz Lehárin in 1932. Auden wanted to live in "wine country near a city with an opera house," and he moved to the Vienna Woods. Yet Hofmann doesn't just drop names; he takes us to the particular nooks dear to Schubert, say, or Schönberg, and offers us pastoral symphonies down the centuries. ♦

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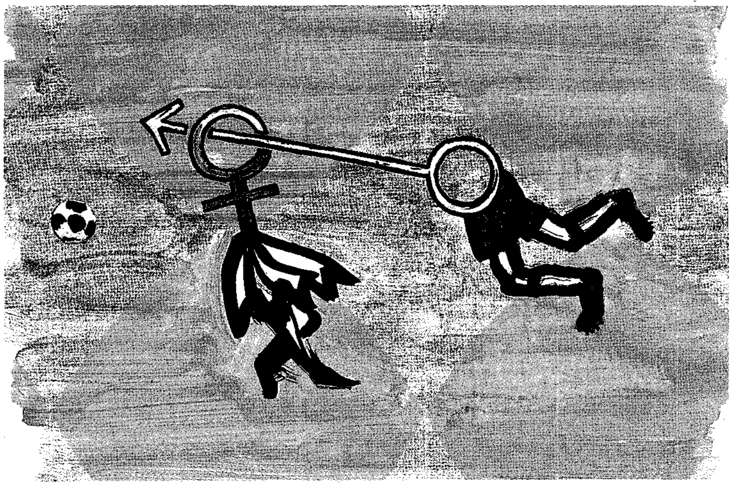
SHOUTS AND MURMURS

EYES ON THE BALL

BY ALASTAIR REID

WHETHER or not Americans have been watching the World Cup over these last weeks, the soccer-playing nations of the planet have certainly been watching Americans watching the World Cup, consumed with curiosity over whether the country will acquire a passion for the game of soccer. At this stage, with the climax of the competition still to come, and with the fate of our own team still in doubt, the answer to that question seems as enigmatic as the outcome of the 1994 championship.

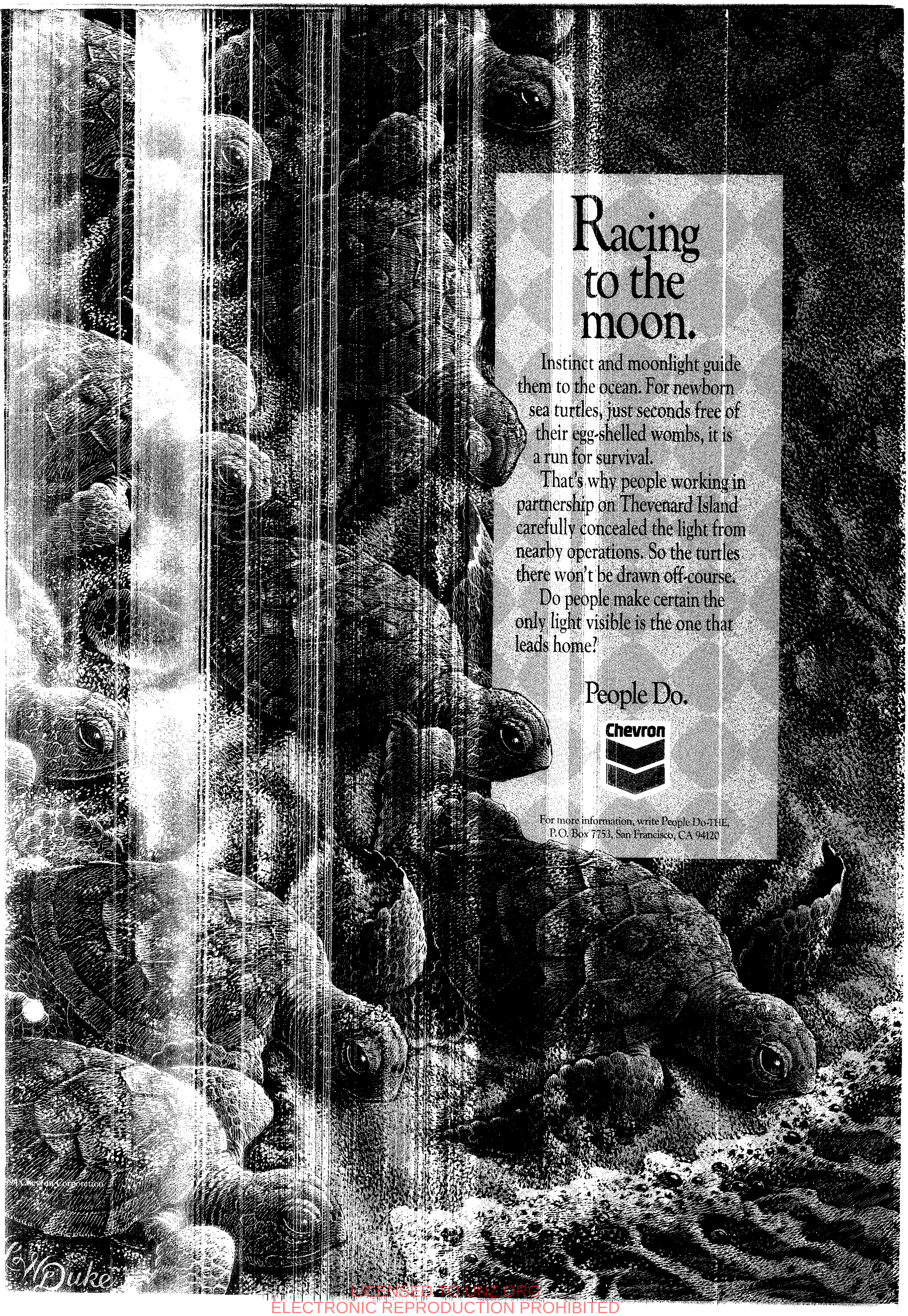
Soccer is not an instant crowd pleaser. Between 1966 and 1986, I reported on the World Cup for *The New Yorker* on five separate occasions, and, dredging my memory, I can come up with a brief mind-video of some extraordinary moments that enshrined the beauty and simplicity of the game. But these occasions also delivered, particularly in their early stages, some numbing encounters between cautious teams anxious not to lose rather than eager to win, which made for a few supremely forgettable games. True fans of the sport, however, are used to suffering through such long wastes of expectation, in anticipation of the odd miraculous moment destined for the annals, like the goal with which Ireland beat Italy two weeks ago, or the occasional fifteen-second flash of inspiration from Diego Maradona, the game's aging Argentine superstar. I remember reading, during the 1966 World Cup, about a young Berliner who, nagged persistently by his mother for staying home from work to watch the games, finally strangled her. I can think of a few soccer-minded countries that might have inclined toward leniency in his case.



In one respect, however, the 1994 World Cup has far outdone any of its previous manifestations. The opening ceremony, with its dancers in gold jumpsuits climbing a large World Cup trophy, made it clear that, however the games turned out, the tournament was designed as a spectacle that would send its sponsors and souvenir sellers running happily to the bank, and make of it "an exciting sports and entertainment event," as the organizing committee put it. The players who had assembled, some of them from places as far-flung as Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, must have wondered if there was anything they could do on the field of play that could match the hoo-ha and hype of those legions of well-rehearsed and noncompetitive extras, who must have relished the off-season employment. But to dress up the World Cup so elaborately does it a disservice, for the appeal of soccer always lies in its simplicity, its lack of clutter.

I had a friend in Scotland, a diplomat, who in the fifties was posted to Laos. An insatiable soccer fan, he made a point of seeking out local games when he could, and there he witnessed an unusual halftime diversion. When the players left the field for the fifteen-minute interval, from each goal a solitary figure emerged. One of them wore, covering head and shoulders, a giant penis fashioned of finely woven straw, appropriately painted, erect, and pointing forward; the other figure wore, also covering head and shoulders, a similarly fashioned and painted vulva of equal dimensions, elliptical and vertical. Neither of the figures could see. Through whistles and shouted directions, the crowd attempted to maneuver the couple to within range of each other. At further urging, the vulva opened, and the crowd, now in a state of high excitement, encouraged the two toward one another with such shrill precision that penetration was achieved before the fifteen minutes were up.

Compared to marching bands, cheerleaders, baton-twirlers, and flag-wavers this ritual has much to be said for it, in its directness, its economy, its participatory nature, and its ability to arouse the attention of large crowds; with a global technology now considerably advanced from the woven-straw stage, as updated version of this courtship might clear the field of lesser diversions. It could do wonders for the World Cup.



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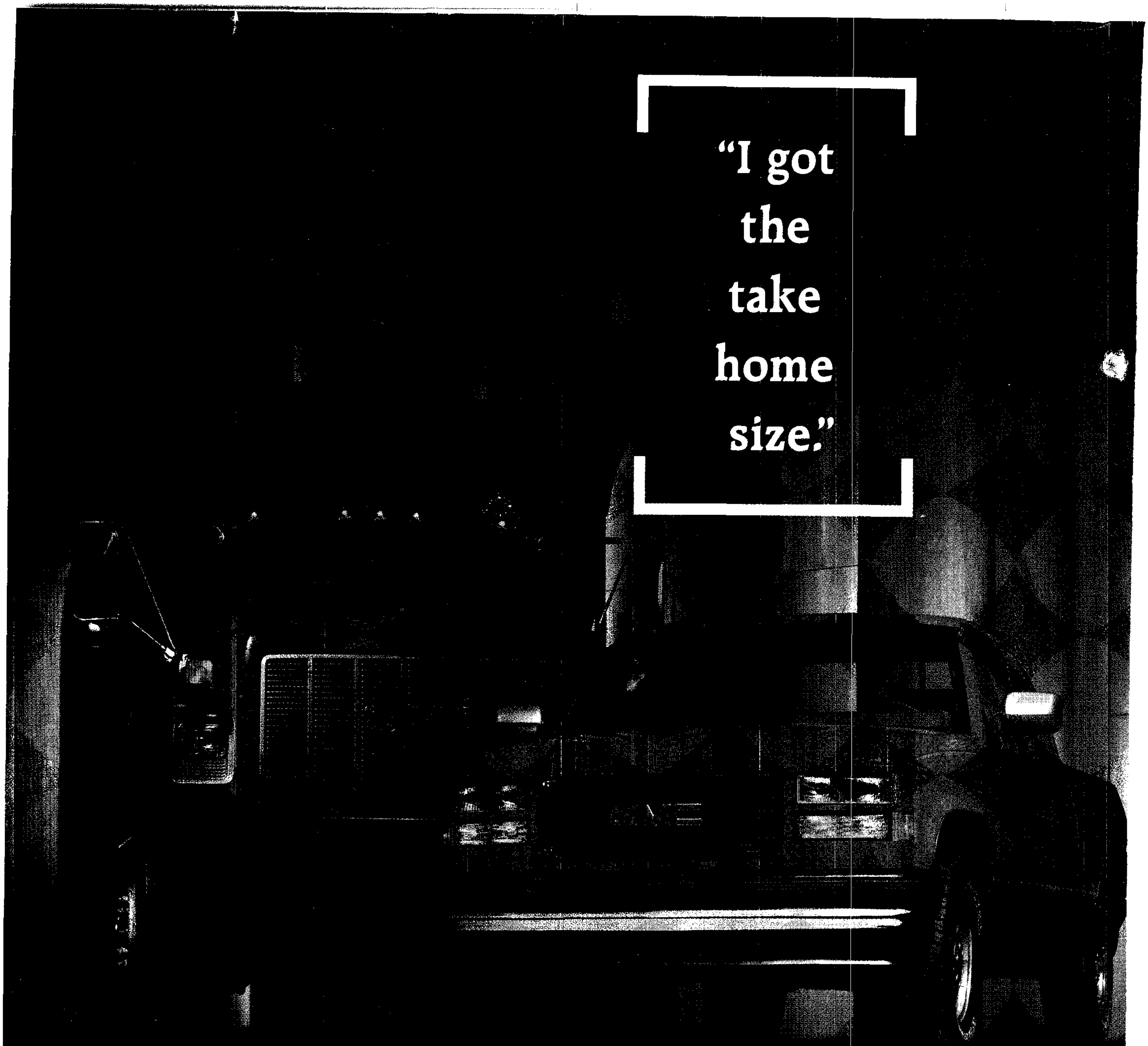

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